

THE GOOD SHEPHERD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES
AND THE MORAVIAN TRADITION

A Professional Project
Presented to
the Faculty of the
School of Theology at Claremont

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
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Abstract

The Good Shepherd Presbyterian Churches and the Moravian Tradition

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This project is an examination of two ministries within the Protestant Church which are usually treated as obscure despite their importance. The first is a current ministry in Monterey Park, California where three Presbyterian churches work together. All three share the same facility and treat each other as equal partners in ministry despite the fact that they come from three very different cultural backgrounds. One is Korean, another is Taiwanese, and the third is the original, English-speaking congregation. Chapter 2 outlines the ministry in Monterey Park.

The second ministry still exists in America, but was much more significant during the pre-Revolutionary years of American history. It is the Moravian Church. Chapters 3 through 6 detail the history of the Moravian Church and determine the legacy which it has left for Protestantism today. The Moravian Church is especially noted for its musical, denominational, and theological influence.

After completing this description of the two ministries, parallels and relationships are drawn between the two churches. Their importance for the modern

mainline Protestant church is described and verified as the parallels are drawn. Unique perspectives on mission and theological motifs form two of the most prominent connections and contributions.

The project concludes by describing the advantages of the Trinitarian pattern of relationship employed by the three Good Shepherd Presbyterian churches. Ways in which the pattern may be employed in other situations of Protestant ministry are suggested.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Imagine a modest Presbyterian congregation dreaming of building a sanctuary in an area like Los Angeles, California where even "modest" (i.e., minimal) buildings cost millions of dollars.

Now divide that congregation into three congregations and imagine trying to get those three congregations to work together, to come up with one dream together, and to agree on one plan together to make that dream come true.

Now, again, make those three congregations not just three ordinary congregations typical of the American Mainline Church. Make them three congregations of three different languages, three different cultures, and multi-racial, too.

An impossible dream? A tower of Babel? Not at all. It is an exciting, working reality for the Good Shepherd Church(es) of Monterey Park.

Imagine, again, another scene:

"Above them shone the keen, cold stars, God's messengers of peace; around them ranged the babel of strife; and the Count, remembering how the Prince of Peace had been born in a humble wayside lodging, named the future settlement Bethlehem."¹ This is how one

¹J. E. Hutton, A History of the Moravian Church (London: Moravian Publication Office, 1909), 371.

commentator has described the christening of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania as the center for the Moravian Church in America.

This is vintage Moravianism. It is a scene full of charm, quiet, and peace. The time is Christmas Eve, 1741 -- a Sunday, even! There has been an entire day of worship services, culminating with Communion. Then Christmas vigils began. We see Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf, the leader of the Moravians, acting as commanding and inspirational as he was world-reknown to be. We see a scene so much like the original Bethlehem: a group of strangers in a new area, outcast and sharing space with the animals in a crude, makeshift shelter.

Pristine Christianity, humbleness and simplicity -- these are as Moravian as their emphasis on peace.

Intentionally leading the people to the end of building where the animals are housed, the Count leads them in a favorite Moravian hymn:

Not Jerusalem,
Rather Bethlehem
Gave us that which
Makes life rich. . . .²

The presence of warm hearts glowing despite the surroundings, the concentration of those hearts upon Christ, and the stoking of that glow by the fellowship of believers -- these are trademarks of Moravianism as well.

²John R. Weinlick, Count Zinzendorf (New York: Abingdon, 1956), 160.

As the climax, Zinzendorf names this one-room shelter and its area Bethlehem with a two-fold purpose in mind. It mirrors the "Little Town of Bethlehem" known for Christ's birth and its name, "House of Bread," signifies its destined purpose to be the center for nourishing the future missionary enterprises of the Moravian Church in America. Mission, the outward call, is as central to the Moravian spirit as the inward devotion. The christening is complete.

These two scenes appear to have absolutely nothing in common. Indeed, neither one has heard or seen the other. The only thing which they appear to share is obscurity. One is tucked quietly in eastern valleys of Pennsylvania. The other exists in the chaos and turbulence of an area near Los Angeles, California called Monterey Park. In addition, these two scenes are about two hundred years apart.

But the purpose of this paper is to describe the history behind both of these scenes: the evolution of the ministry at Monterey Park and the development of the Moravian Church. I will try to argue that neither one ought to be obscure. Both are significant. Both are relevant to the modern ministry of the Mainline Protestant Church. Furthermore, although there has never been any connection whatsoever between the two "M's" -- the Moravians and Monterey Park -- I will show that some

parallels do exist between them. These parallels ought to suggest both that the Moravians should not be relegated to past history and that the ministry by the Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church does have a broader significance than what it means to the local community of Monterey Park. Hopefully, at the end of the paper, the reader will be stimulated to consider the Moravian heritage more seriously and to explore new ways to create ethnic ministries. These are both very worthwhile ends.

CHAPTER 2

The Good Shepherd Presbyterian Churches of Monterey Park

Our description of the ministry of the Good Shepherd Presbyterian Churches in Monterey Park is provocative, but how did the Good Shepherd Churches arrive at such an arrangement?

The Beginning

First, it certainly was not a plan of their own choosing.

In 1952, two declining, urban Presbyterian churches of Los Angeles made a typical Mainline Church move. The Hollenbeck Presbyterian Church (organized in 1885) and the Trinity Presbyterian Church (1923) sold their two inner-city buildings, merged their dying congregations, and moved to the suburbs where all the usual potential Mainline church members had moved. They expected that the new building, the new cozy, suburban locale, and the larger starting membership would naturally draw hundreds of new members through their new doors.

What happened was something else. It might be considered the ultimate church's dream come all too true.

Not hundreds, but thousands -- in fact, tens of thousands of people streamed into the supposedly "quiet

little suburb." An explosion occurred.

From the beginning, the original congregation had a special intensity to it. But there was nothing in its own intensity that could ever match the intensity of the eruption that was going to happen to it. When the first building was built, a small chapel, plans were made for the larger, "real" sanctuary to be built. The bell, the stained glass windows, and the pipes for the organ from the old inner city churches were preserved and stored in the attic, ready to come down at a moment's notice to start a new life in the new sanctuary to be built. The "explosion" and other things interrupted those plans, but the original members of that first congregation still talk of those pipes as if they were in the attic alive.

When the Christian Education wing was added on, a foundation was poured for two stories instead of the existing one story. The tile for the new roof to go over the structure was actually bought and housed in a special little building which looks like a pillbox sitting smack in front of every other structure on the premises. These people had high, high hopes. But nothing within them was going to be equal to the volcano that was to greet them outside their doors.

The Monterey Park Explosion

Monterey Park erupted. In the last seven years alone, over 100,000 people have moved into Monterey Park or its

vicinity, bringing cataclysmic change with them overnight. There was only one other "minor" change in the original congregation's plans: Instead of these new people being the typical potential new members of the Mainline Protestant Church -- white, upper-middle class, college-educated Americans -- they were Asian immigrants!

Monterey Park has gained a national reputation. It has been called many things: "The Nation's First Suburban Chinatown;"¹ the new Ellis Island for the East; "a mecca for the Chinese."² It was marketed in Taiwan and in Hong Kong as "the Beverley Hills for the Chinese."³ But people of all Asian nationalities and of all economic segments of society came and now live side-by-side. It is claimed that in the late 1970s a developer, Frederic Hsieh, assessed that the original Chinatown in Los Angeles was virtually full. He simply decided that Monterey Park was the next logical location and bought massive amounts of its land.⁴

The demographic statistics (such as they exist) are mind-boggling. The Los Angeles Times reports Monterey Park

¹Mark Arax, "Monterey Park: Nation's First Suburban Chinatown," Los Angeles Times, 6 April 1987, sec. 1:1.

²Arax, sec. 1:3.

³Arax, sec. 1: 1.

⁴Arax, sec. 1:1.

as the second popular destination for Asian immigrants.⁵ It is exceeded only by New York City and it is more popular than such places as Honolulu, San Francisco, and Los Angeles itself.

The Asian immigration has not just added to the Caucasian presence. As the Asian groups moved in, the whites fled. The Los Angeles Times reports that "the proportion of whites in the area has plummeted from 78% in 1970 to 56% in 1980 to an estimated 36% of the region's 327,000 residents today."⁶ "Will the Last American to Leave Monterey Park Please Bring the Flag?" was a sign posted on a gas station which could be seen driving to the Good Shepherd Church any Sunday.

The most important fact, though, is the Los Angeles Times declaration of Monterey Park as "the highest concentration of Asian residents of any city in our country" -- 51 percent.⁷ Please keep in mind that all of these figures are estimates -- usually conservative estimates. The most recent report of the concentration of Asian people in Monterey Park has been 82 percent in a January 26, 1989 television special on CBS News!

The impact that these changes have had on the

⁵Mark Arax, "Asian Influx Alters Life in Suburbia," Los Angeles Times, 5 April 1987, sec. 1:29.

⁶Arax, "Asian Influx," 31.

⁷Mark Arax, "Monterey Park Forum to Seek Harmony," Los Angeles Times, 11 Oct. 1987, sec. S:3.

community has been as upheaving as the area's earthquakes. Jon Elder, the city's police chief in 1987, described the change like this:

When I worked graveyard in this city from 1960 to 1968, we'd call them "cannonball nights." You could shoot a cannon off at Atlantic and Garvey [the city's two main streets] and it could fly through the air and roll to a stop without hitting a soul. Those days are long gone. The other night I was out at 3:30 in the morning, and I counted 34 cars stopped at a red light at Atlantic and Garvey. It looked like rush hour.⁹

The schools have particularly felt the impact of the hurricane.

Some teachers talk of being missionaries in their own country. The 20,000-student Alhambra school district ranks first nationwide in its proportion of Asian students, growing from 11% in 1975 to 48% today. More than 75% of these students are foreign-born, school statistics show. Half cannot speak proficient English.⁹

Economically, "commercial land that sold for \$5 a square foot in the early 1970's had tripled in value five years later and would not peak until the early 1980's at \$45 a square foot."¹⁰ That is a nine-fold increase in price in ten years. Now that much of the land is sold, the plateau reached in the early 1980s is probably out-of-date.

When this drastic change began, Monterey Park was

⁹Arax, "Nation's First Suburban Chinatown," 1:3.

⁹Arax, "Nation's First Suburban Chinatown," 1:3.

¹⁰Arax, "Asian Influx," 30.

"poised for redevelopment" as the euphemism goes. Eighty percent of that development has been accomplished by Asians.¹¹

A dozen Chinese-run banks with combined deposits of more than \$400 million have opened since 1979. Three Chinese-language newspapers with worldwide circulations are headquartered or have branch offices on a single street in town. The city supports 60 Chinese restaurants and several Chinese-run nightclubs in a 7.7-square-mile area.¹²

Monterey Park has clearly become a city of international proportions. "We are divided by an ocean," said one person, "but in reality it's just a street."¹³

The political and attitudinal changes that have accompanied these other upheavals have gained even greater attention. They are a major reason why Monterey Park has a national reputation.

Initially, the response of the white and Hispanic residents was positive. A 1986 Washington Post article begins by describing the situation three years earlier when Monterey Park was named an All-American City.¹⁴ A woman, Lily Lee Chen, was elected as "the nation's first female Chinese-American mayor." The multi-colored signs of the shops and the proliferation of the languages combined with

¹¹Arax, "Asian Influx," 1:31.

¹²Arax, "Nation's First Suburban Chinatown," 1:3.

¹³Arax, "Nation's First Suburban Chinatown," 1:3..

¹⁴Jay Matthews, "Immigrant Dominance Spurring a Backlash," Washington Post, 10 May 1986: A3.

a booming economy made Monterey Park seem like a dream town. It was the quintessential California city, the city of the future existing successfully right now. It was "integrated, prosperous, peaceful."

But then the backlash began.

Chen and her two Latino running-mates were ousted by a coalition of white, hard-line conservatives, a coalition that saw this ouster as just "step one" in a enormous plan to reverse the entire tidal-wave that had been sweeping up Monterey Park. Their goals were much higher than just the replacement of a few city council seats. The new mayor, Barry Hatch who was a former Mormon missionary in Hong Kong, called for a ban on all immigration. The Washington Post suggested that this election signaled "a rebirth of anti-immigrant politics that appears in turbulent cycles in American history."¹⁵ Hatch's coalition introduced an onslaught of other "reforms" for Monterey Park: a slow growth initiative, an attempt to ban the display of any flags other than the Stars and Stripes, mandatory use of English on all public signs, etc. But the most symbolic battle which seized the national attention was the birth of the movement to make English the official language, not only for Monterey Park but for all of California and the United States. Naturally, there were some overt incidents of racial slurs in the

¹⁵Matthews, A3.

community, but what was amazing in Monterey Park was absence of massive rebellion and widespread violence. As one sociologist, John Huston, noted:

That's what is positive about Monterey Park. It isn't just armed camps organized on racial grounds. There aren't cross burnings. People aren't shooting each other. A lot of people live next door to people from other cultures and they are having to work that out. That's the day-to-day reality. Just people living their lives.¹⁴

In this two-fold context, the dynamic character of the Good Shepherd ministry is seen: against the background of intense controversy and in response to the virtual explosion that ignited the Monterey Park situation in the beginning. The massive influx of thousands of Asian immigrants demanded a response from the church, but the consequent climate of both creativity and chaos, of cooperation and collision, and of the inevitable tension created by the enormous, vying forces to make giant steps forward in progress and, for others, to amass an even larger effort to turn back the tide -- these things further accentuate the importance and boldness of the ministry at Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church.

At Monterey Park, the fundamental issues of life (including religion) are forced to the surface, demanding a substantive and positive answer that is both fresh -- able to address this ultra-modern situation -- and yet also

¹⁴Berkley Hudson, "Monterey Park's Mix Lures Researchers," Los Angeles Times, 23 Oct. 1988, sec. 9:1.

old, in fact, ancient -- grounded and rooted deeply in the traditions and forces that are at work here which are themselves venerable, rich, and deep in the many different cultures colliding on this 7.7 square-mile area. Here the "ultimate questions" of life and religion are being asked. They are being asked by people of many races, many nations, many heritages, and many languages in expectation of a creative, fertile response.

The Church's Response

The response of the original Good Shepherd Church was creative. There is no question about that.

Two other congregations were taken in as partners in mission at Monterey Park. One was Korean; the other was Formosan.¹⁷ Both were Presbyterian like the original group.

The notion of multiple congregations using one facility is not unique to Good Shepherd. In fact, hardly a church in Los Angeles does not have another congregation "nesting" in their facility. One church in San Gabriel Presbytery has four! What was new about Good Shepherd was the relationship established between the three churches. The "nesting" arrangement so prevalent elsewhere was

¹⁷The designations are according to primary language spoken. The Formosan language is the language spoken by the Taiwanese people who were the native inhabitants of the island before the current regime. It is the language outlawed in Taiwan for use in public worship or in printed documents such as the Bible.

emphatically rejected.

The reasons for this rejection were many. For some, it had to do with their belief about the Holy Spirit and the meaning of love. For others, it was a matter of all Christians being members of the same family of God. "If they are our brothers and sisters," as one elder put it, "how can we charge them rent to be a part of the same family of God?" For others, it was a question of stewardship: "Whose facilities were these? Do we own them or is this a house of God?" But for all, there was an unquestionable rejection of the hierarchical, paternalistic arrangement whereby one church holds all of the power and the others pay money to it.

The other two congregations were accepted as equals -- equals in access to the facility and also equals in authority over it. This relationship (as far as we have been able to determine) is unparalleled in America, at least in the Presbyterian denomination. In essence, the church that had the roof, the bell, the pipes, the stained-glass, and most of all the ferocious hope of a sanctuary within a hand's grasp for itself traded it for a minority share -- one-third -- of its existing control and set its heart of hope on a future which would be created hand-in-hand with two other churches from two different cultures and speaking two new languages in Monterey Park. Ever since then, the Good Shepherd Church(es) have found

that taking our unity and equality in Christ as the presupposition of ministry is a relentless challenge to grow, expand, and to change.

The starting point for the creation of this new relationship was the recreation of the Board of Trustees. The power of the board was to be shared equally with equal representation from all three churches. A neutral moderator, the Rev. George Tewksbury, was chosen as moderator. He had been a former missionary in Pakistan.

But the movement towards unity could not be stopped there. A gamble had been taken. A major commitment had been made. The risk, the leap of faith, generated a new energy that obviously could not be satisfied with a mere rearrangement of the Board of Trustees. Other opportunities for uniting and cooperating were tackled. Multi-cultural fellowship meals were planned. Worship was conducted at one service in all three languages on World Communion Sunday. One bulletin was printed, but also, one cup was shared. The choirs began practising together. The pastors began meeting with each other. At one point, when one of the pastors was still learning English, meetings were conducted in a fourth language: Japanese.

Fortunately, both of the Asian congregations have been blessed with extra-ordinary pastoral leadership. David Huang from the Formosan church had been a pastor for twenty-eight years in Taiwan before starting his American

congregation from two families and a handful of college students. The first Korean minister with whom I worked studied at Union Seminary in New York when many of the theological "giants" of our times were there. The current Korean pastor was trained in Korea after being saved from a firing squad in North Korea because one of the soldiers about to execute him recognized him as a former classmate in a Christian school.

This past year we celebrated the tenth anniversary of perhaps the most substantial step that was taken after the forming of the Joint Board of Trustees: the total unification of the Christian Education programs of the Korean and English-speaking congregations.¹⁰ In our Christian Education program, both Korean and English-speaking adults teach side-by-side. The youth of both congregations learn in a totally integrated environment also.

What is most amazing is that the program is totally run by laypeople. Neither the Korean pastor nor I attend any teacher meetings. At one meeting which I sat in on as a visitor, the teachers requested weekly written evaluations of their own performances by the Church School superintendent. Written tests of the student's knowledge

¹⁰The unification of all three churches' Church Schools was tried, but the building and parking space would not allow members of all three churches to be present at the same time.

are routinely given. The teachers of both congregations organize their own weekend training retreats and run a week-long retreat in the summer for their students. Never have I seen such a powerful, self-run Christian Education program in a church in America. Clearly the language, race, and cultural differences are not barriers. Instead, they act as extra incentives.

Most recently, Good Shepherd took the further step of forming a Joint Building Committee to make plans for doubling the Christian Education classrooms, creating a major new parking arrangement, and to finally realize the dream of a "real" sanctuary at Good Shepherd. It is hard to believe that all of this ministry has occurred in a facility that has yet to have a true sanctuary. The two Asian congregations have been worshipping in the fellowship hall -- the largest space available. Now we can see why this step which we outlined at the beginning of our story is neither an impossible dream nor a tower of Babel. It is just one more step generated by the initial leap of commitment and faith. The final one -- so far -- has been to hire one minister in common to work with all three congregations to help fulfill the ever-increasing need for English-speaking ministry.

Has the Good Shepherd minstry been successful? Simply from the number of steps that it has taken: unquestionably,

yes.¹⁹ In addition, the current facility is jammed past its capacity. The parking situation is so critical that none of the churches can grow until more parking space can be found. The city would require Good Shepherd to at least quadruple the parking before adding any new facility. The classrooms are so overflowing that more classes meet in the hallways or on the grass than in official classrooms. Fortunately, it does not rain too often in southern California. The youth groups are burgeoning not only in numbers but in talent. What other minister has the privilege of working with a youth group where the norm for the high school student is: to be fluent in four to six languages (while studying French or German in school); play a musical instrument or sing like a virtuoso; and display an enthusiasm for the Christian faith that has become the exception rather than the rule in the other mainline congregations.²⁰

Naturally there have been mistakes and conflicts. They are to be expected. But even the misunderstandings are learning experiences, one more challenge to growth.

¹⁹Especially, keeping in mind that all of them have been lay-initiated and lay-run. The pastors have played an important role, but the power has clearly come from the congregations themselves.

²⁰When I was asked by the Korean congregation to be their youth leader, I was told that they expected an hour lecture on a biblical topic, followed by two hours of answering questions from the floor, and then a social hour afterwards: 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Saturday night.

CHAPTER 3

The Moravian Spirit

Our opening scene about the christening of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania may be interesting, you may be wondering. But "Who are Moravians?" The Moravians are less known than the turbulent conditions in Monterey Park. In terms of even their tourist-value, the Moravians are outshined by their religious neighbors in Pennsylvania, the Amish. In all of America, the Moravians numbered only 24,593 in 1987.¹ So the question "Who are the Moravians?" is a very legitimate one to ask.

Sydney Ahlstrom, the noted historian of American Church history, calls the Moravians "the most important of the pietistic sects in America."² This comment, however, which is intended to confer upon them an honor actually restricts their importance because not many people are interested in studying "pietistic sects" and neither are we. As a pietistic sect, the Moravians have had an influence on Mainline religion in America. But that is not our interest. Our interest is in those dimensions of

¹"Directory and Statistics," Moravian Daily Texts: 1989 (Bethlehem, Pa.: The Moravian Church in America, 1988), 71.

²Sydney Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 241.

Moravianism which transcend pietism and sectarianism which reawaken areas of religious life that ought to be relevant to the Mainline Protestant Church.

So, what else is Moravianism?

An Introduction to Moravian History

Historically, the Moravians are a Protestant community which traces its roots back to the early revolt in Bohemia of John Hus against the Roman Catholic Church. The character of Hus's rebellion against the Roman Catholic Church is very important to Moravian history. That early revolt ended in the martyrdom of Hus in 1415. After he was burned at the stake, one Moravian story claims, "As they prodded about among the glowing embers to see how much of Hus was left, they found, to their surprise, that his heart was still unburned."³ The executioners quickly speared the heart and tossed it back into the fire, but that unburnt heart of Hus would be a very appropriate symbol of the beginnings of the Moravian Church.

The martyrdom of Hus hardly cooled the flames of rebellion against the Catholic Church. In fact, the exact opposite happened. It poured fuel on the fire. Unfortunately, without the galvinizing leadership of Hus's charismatic personality, the rebellion soon disintegrated. The ensuing Hussite War became a disgrace to the noble life and death of Hus and a nasty, blood-drenched debacle in

³Hutton, 27.

itself. Hus's movement quickly split into several different factions. Each faction began warring against the others as much as against the Roman Catholic Church. After forty-one years of bloodshed, violence, and lost dreams, it was clear that this tragedy was a step forward for neither Hus nor the nation nor any church. At that point, a small group of Bohemians declared that they had had enough. In 1456 they withdrew to the valley of Kunwald to form a community of their own.

They called themselves the Unitas Fratrum, the "Unity of the Brethren."⁴ They formed their community in order to preserve and live out the original ideals of Hus's revolution and to embrace pacifism, instead of warfare, as a way of life. Their goal was a more biblical, early Christian lifestyle interpreted as a communal, egalitarian society living out the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount. Their concerns were oriented towards peace and unity, purity of morals, the primacy of scripture over the church, and equality among brothers and sisters. They retained the Apostles' Creed, but rejected many later

⁴I must apologize for the use of sexist language here, but this is their usual term and no other translation is easily arrived at. "The Unity of the Brothers and Sisters" would be more inclusive. Perhaps "The Fellowship of Unity" would be the best alternative and my preference since it emphasizes the group's two goals of unity and community, but I am hesitant to impose a totally new term of my own upon another group of people. In future references, I shall leave the term untranslated: Unitas Fratrum. In actuality, Jednota Bratraska was the original term.

Roman Catholic doctrines such as purgatory, indulgences, and the worship of the saints. They experienced the usual movements of growth and decline in the strength of their community until a person called Martin Luther appeared in another part of Europe.

The Reformation of Martin Luther proved to be both a benefit and a bane to the Unitas Fratrum. Luther's revolution certainly did much to confirm and redeem the legitimacy of Hus's earlier revolution and the existence of the group. Without Luther's success, the Unitas Fratrum would probably be just another religious experiment, a truly sectarian movement, insignificant in the history of the Roman Catholic Church.

But whatever substantiation that Luther's movement may have lent to the earlier fellowship, it soon was overshadowed by the renewed opposition of the Catholic Church to the original community. The Reformation brought the Counter-Reformation. No longer could the Catholic overlook this minor group in the mountains and treat them as if they did not exist. The Unitas Fratrum was particularly singled out for persecution.

The Catholic persecution of the Unity fellowship came dangerously close to being the most successful persecution in the history of the Christian Church. At the time of Luther's writing of his "Ninety-Five Theses," the Unitas Fratrum numbered 200,000 persons. That entire membership

of the community was killed except a literal handful of believers. The survivors of the persecution were forced to practise their religion underground.

This time in the history of their church has acquired the name "the period of the Hidden Seed." The great John Amos Comenius provided leadership for this tiny remnant of underground faith. Comenius is often called "the Father of Modern Education" because of the revolution he brought to the way learning could be successfully conducted. Comenius was invited to become the first president of the first university in the New World of America -- Harvard -- but he turned it down. He believed that the existence of his people was in its eleventh hour and that his greater calling was to his church. We can see, however, that the Moravians are hardly strangers to the world of higher education.

Finally, in 1722, a remnant of the original group gave in to the persecution. They abandoned their homes and almost all of their belongings and fled their homeland. They chose to start a new life of freedom in Protestant Germany.

And so, at ten o'clock one night, there met at the house of Jacob Neisser, in Schlen, a small band of emigrants. At the head of the band was Christian David; and the rest of the little group consisted of Augustin and Jacob Neisser, their wives and children, Martha Neisser, and Michael Jaeschke, a cousin of the family. . . . Across the mountains they came, by winding and unknown paths. For the sake of their faith they left their goods and chattels

behind; long and weary was their march; and at length, worn out and footsore, they arrived, with Christian David at their head, at Zinzendorf's estate at Berthelsdorf.⁵

The group obviously was miniscule and most were from Moravia rather than Bohemia, the origins of Hus's revolt. Hence, they became to be known as "the Moravians." This association of Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf and the small band of Moravian refugees marked the beginning of a new era for the spirit of Moravianism. The Moravians talk of "rebirth" or "the Renewed Moravian Church."⁶

The streams had met: the new river was formed; and thus the course of Renewed Brethren's History had begun.⁷

Originally this relationship between the German Count and the Moravian people was purely a material one. It was an act of philanthropy on the part of a rich Lutheran nobleman towards a group of rag-tag refugees whom he did not even greet when they arrived. The relationship soon grew, however, far beyond the generous lending of the use of a portion of land. Zinzendorf, a pietist, was struck by the extreme devotion and simple faith of this tiny community. He was won over by their way of life and their unshakeable confidence in God's providential care over them. He also was impressed by one of Comenius's books,

⁵Hutton, 196.

⁶Dated from August 13, 1727. Moravian Daily Texts, 225.

⁷Hutton, 196.

Ratio Disciplinae, which outlined the discipline of the community.^e What Zinzendorf had been searching for as a pietist, he found realized in the community of the refugees.

Meanwhile, the Moravian emigrants were also won over by the person of the Count. The Count had a charismatic personality, a knack for organization (and the finances to do it), and a genius for leadership to match his eloquence in articulating his religious ideas. The Moravians adopted the Count as their leader. The history of this creative and controversial spiritual relationship has marked the Moravian community ever since. "Two streams meeting," Hutton called it. This is what being "a Moravian" has come to mean.

^eHutton, 172.

CHAPTER 4

Why Study the Moravians?

Again, we might ask ourselves: all of this history of the Moravians is eminently interesting, but what has it to do with the American Mainline Protestant Church? How can they be connected to the situation in Monterey Park? Still the question remains:

Why study the Moravians?

First, I believe that the Moravians are worth studying because I, indeed, have found them relevant to the whirlpools of Monterey Park. The second part of this paper is intended to demonstrate some of those connections. As a Presbyterian minister in eastern Pennsylvania and then in western New Jersey, I became acquainted with the Moravians.¹ I do not at all profess to be an authority on Moravianism. But I have found elements of their faith and life valuable in my ministry in Monterey Park. Because of them, I have seen dimensions of the nation's first suburban Chinatown that I never would have seen without their influence. In many ways, I stand as Count Zinzendorf once did: as an admiring outsider (he being

¹The first house in which my wife and I lived was rented from Moravians, and was situated behind a Moravian cemetery and church.

first an intense Lutheran). Both my distance and the closeness to the Moravians are important to understand in order to be fair to both them and me.

The Moravians and the Beginning
of the Protestant Faith

More importantly, it would be good to study the Moravians because, when we are talking about the Moravian Church, we are probing the earliest beginnings of our Protestant faith. If the mainline church in America is suffering from a crisis of membership and meaning, then to go back to its beginnings -- before "mainline," before America, even before the invention of the word "Protestant"² -- ought to be a worthwhile affair. The Moravian Church likes to call itself the oldest Protestant Church. That title might require an asterisk considering the presence also of the Waldensians,³ but unquestionably in the Moravians we can see the primal movements of Protestant faith. Over one hundred years before Martine Luther posted his famous "Ninety-Five Theses" on the wood of the Wittenberg door, John Hus kept his more fatal

²The first followers of Luther's Reformation called themselves "evangelicals" or "reformed." The widespread use of the word "Protestant" did not occur until Elizabethan England. See James Hastings Nichols, Primer for Protestants (New York: Association Press, 1947), 3.

³The modern Moravian historian, John R. Weinlick, makes such a note in his introduction to the Moravian faith. See John R. Weinlick, "The Moravian Church," The American Church of the Protestant Heritage, ed. Vergilius Ferm (New York: Philosophical Library, 1953), 7-25.

appointment with that very different kind of wood, burning at his stake in 1415. "At the beginning of the Reformation there were more than 400 Brethren or Moravian churches with about 175,000 members."⁴ This was certainly a significant presence.

The Moravians and Luther

This, however, raises another question. Normally, if we were to ask ourselves the question: "What is the oldest Protestant denomination?" we would expect the answer to be some branch of the Lutheran church. After all, Martin Luther is universally recognized as the "Father of the Reformation" and the founder of the Protestant Church. Obviously, with any revolution prior to Luther the question must be raised in what way the term "Protestant" is truly appropriate. In other words, how closely can we legitimately connect the mind of Luther with the "heart of Hus"?

Obviously, some difference between the two is to be expected. The precise relation between the two movements we will have to discuss. But, actually, the answer to that question is a third reason for studying the Moravians. They were reknown for their rigorous adherence

⁴Frank Mead, Handbook of Denominations (Nashville: Abingdon, 1966), 157. See also Owen Chadwick, The Reformation (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1972), 14 for the state of these "Hussite heretics" and the other gatherings of peoples opposed to the Roman Catholic Church prior to Luther's reform. If the Moravians are not the oldest, they are certainly among the earliest.

to the Lutheran tradition almost to a fault. Leiv Aalen has recently tried to question seriously a close connection between the theology of Luther and the thought of the major Moravian theologian, Count Zinzendorf.⁵ But the American historian, George Forell, has responded by calling the Count "the most influential German theologian between Luther and Schleiermacher." That is high praise considering that there are such people as Philip Melancthon in between.⁶

In Zinzendorf's time, the Count was known as Lutherus vere redivivus and Ludwig Feuerbach substantiated that claim -- though not in a particularly complimentary way.⁷ John Wesley broke ties with Zinzendorf and the Moravians in large part because, in his words, "They follow Luther, for better, for worse."⁸ Clearly, the relationship

⁵Leiv Aalen, Die Theologie des jungen Zinzendorf [The theology of young Zinzendorf] (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1966). A fairer appraisal, I believe, is to see the Moravians as one of three legitimate branches of Protestantism alongside Luther and Calvin. Just as Calvin sought to be a follower of Luther but also differed from him very significantly, so the Moravians ought to be interpreted. Their differences from Luther should not be considered any more an aberration than Calvin's differences were.

⁶Nicolaus Ludwig Count von Zinzendorf, Nine Public Lectures on Important Subjects in Religion, trans. George Forell (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1973), viii.

⁷Ludwig Feuerbach, Samtliche Werke [Lecture Works] (Stuttgart: Frommann, 1960), 2:69.

⁸John Wesley, John Wesley: A Representative Collection of His Writings, ed. Albert Outler (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 366 [from Wesley's Journal

between the Moravians and the Protestant heritage descended from both Luther and Calvin needs to be carefully distinguished, but it is the repeated testimony of the Moravians own enemies that they follow that heritage too closely. What they have to say should have importance for the modern Mainline Protestant Church even if it should chose to consider its beginnings with Luther rather than Hus.

The Moravians and Early American History

A fourth reason for studying the Moravians is that they did play a critical role in the formation of the religious and cultural life of the American variety of Protestantism. The heyday of Moravianism -- the era of Count Zinzendorf -- was also the heyday of America's awakening to religious experience: the period of the Great Awakening. The time when the Moravians were launching their mission in the New World through the christening of Bethlehem was also the time when the great figures of George Whitefield, the Wesleys, Jonathan Edwards, and Gilbert Tennent strutted the religious stage. The Moravians never would have reached Pennsylvania without Whitefield. Their original intention was to work for him in establishing a school for Blacks in Pennsylvania. They never would have started Bethlehem, either, if Whitefield

entry of June 15, 1741]. Again, it is not complimentary: Wesley adds, "Here (I apprehend) is the real spring of the grand error of the Moravians."

did not kick them out of his settlement there in Nazereth. "Gilbert Tennent of Pennsylvania and New Jersey had counted largely on Moravians for the success of his revivals."⁹

The Moravians at that time were considered their equals, particularly as Whitefield, the Wesleys, and the Moravians met side-by-side in the Fetter Lane Society back in England. But, as David Lovejoy has pointed out, the Moravians' companions' mood subtly changed once the great intellectual leader, Jonathan Edwards, began rethinking his whole-hearted support of the extraordinary happenings of the Great Awakening.¹⁰ Then, in 1743, when the great Old Light leader, Charles Chauncy, "threw off his earlier reserve and in point by point refutation denounced the revival as a resurgence of the antinomian and enthusiastic heresies that had plagued the early Puritans,"¹¹ a solution had to be found. The Moravians were made the scapegoats for the Great Awakening's excesses, most

⁹David S. Lovejoy, Religious Enthusiasm in the New World (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 208.

¹⁰Lovejoy, 208-9. The change in Edwards's thought began in 1742 with the publication of "Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England," The Works of President Edwards, vol. 3 (New York: n.p., 1844), 279-395.

¹¹Charles Chauncy, "Some Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New-England," The Great Awakening, eds. Alan Helmert and Perry Miller (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967), 302.

notably by Tennent in his Some Account of the Principles of the Moravians.¹²

By 1743 both Whitefield and Tennent, two of the Awakening's leading figures, had turned their backs on the United Brethren, and the issue ironically was enthusiasm. . . . There were probably many people besides Charles Chauncy who were convinced that the pot was calling the kettle black.¹³

The Moravians thus became "suspect in religion by both Old and New Lights." Then a whole series of historical accidents descended upon the Moravians' missions in America.¹⁴ The Moravians, being both a battered bunch and a quiet, pacifist group reluctant to engage in (especially theological) fights, never recovered from being stigmatized as scapegoats for the Awakening. To this day, the naive impression that the Moravians must be a bunch of wild, sectarian enthusiasts often goes unquestioned.

This may explain the Moravians' current insignificance, but it hardly begins even to suggest the positive contributions that the Moravians have made to

¹²"As if to deflect attention from his own extravagances, which he regretted, Gilbert Tennent in 1743 lit into the Moravians with a fury, sounding very much like Charles Chauncy against New Lights in New England." Lovejoy, 209.

¹³Lovejoy, 209.

¹⁴Their great success in missions with the Native Americans was largely wiped out by war and "New Yorkers found all manner of reasons for driving their missionaries out of the colony" (Lovejoy, 209). See also Ahlstrom, 243.

American Protestant religion. Unfortunately, the Moravians' first and, undoubtedly, most famous act in America exercised its greatest influence back in England -- that being the "conversion" of the Wesleys which helped fire the movement of Methodism which eventually, then, would influence the New World.

The Moravians and the Wesleys

In 1736 a ship named the Simmons set sail for the New World with an extraordinary group aboard. On the ship was the second group of Moravians headed for America. Along with them was General Oglethorpe, the Governor of Georgia, the destination of the Simmons. Charles Wesley was also a passenger, traveling as General Oglethorpe's secretary. He and his brother, John, had been invited by Dr. John Burton who conveniently was both a Trustee of the Georgian penal colony and a patron of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Their mission empowered by Burton was to carry their famous "Holy Club" or "Methodists" of Oxford to the new land of America, especially to these outcasts of society which were to populate the colony of Georgia.

Clearly John Wesley had his own lively faith and theology quite apart from and prior to the voyage of the Simmons. But just as clearly what happened on that voyage created a turning point in Wesley's life -- whether it was a change of direction or a crystallization of previous movements in faith is the only question. And just as

clearly it was the Moravians on that ship who were instrumental in creating that turning point whatever its character may be.

As far as Wesley's own original agenda for his mission to Georgia was concerned, it soon almost hideously (or laughably) degenerated into life-crisis event.

The Methodist mission to Georgia was a fiasco. Charles proved a maladroit secretary to General Oglethorpe; John, a tactless pastor, Ingham and Delamotte, ineffectual assistants. Their general frustration was further complicated by John Wesley's falling in love with Sophie Hopkey, the eighteen-year-old niece of the balliff of Savannah. It was a preposterous and pitiful affair in which Wesley was torn between his long-standing inhibitions and his now-found affections. It was resolved by Sophie herself, who finally eloped with a rival suitor. Her jilted lover then barred her from Holy Communion, and was in turn sued for defamation of character by her new husband. The result was a furious turmoil, climaxed by a formal grand jury indictment of Wesley on twelve separate counts. The trial was dragged out, and after six months of harassment, Wesley fled the tragic farce in disgust and high dudgeon.¹⁵

The missionary to save the criminals turned out to be grand jury material himself!

But just before his whole plans for his life in the New World deteriorated, a whole new world religiously would open up, providing a foundation that would serve as a springboard for a brilliant evangelical and theological career.

Moravian Bishop A. G. Spangenberg would be

¹⁵Wesley, 11-12.

Instrumental in helping Wesley rethink his faith once the Simmons had landed in America, but it was the spirituality of the ordinary Moravian people, especially the simple faith of the common women and children, that impressed Wesley on the ship. As Wesley writes in his Journal:

At seven I went to the Germans [Wesley's term for the Moravians]. I had long before observed the great seriousness of their behaviour. Of their humility they had given a continual proof, by performing those servile offices for the other passengers, which none of the English would undertake; for which they desired, and would receive no pay, saying, 'it was good for their proud hearts', and 'their loving Saviour had done more for them'. And every day had given them occasion of showing a meekness which no injury could move. If they were pushed, struck, or thrown down, they rose again and went away; but no complaint was found in their mouth.¹⁴

Here was that "Sermon on the Mount" devotion that had been passed down from the beginnings of the Unitas Fratrum community. So impressed was Wesley by the Moravians' piety that he began learning German in order to converse with them.

One incident particularly struck Wesley:

There was now an opportunity of trying whether they were delivered from the spirit of fear, as well as from that of pride, anger, and

¹⁴John Wesley, The Journal of John Wesley: A Selection, ed. Elisabeth Jay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 15. Wesley also wrote, "On shipboard, however, I was again active in outward works; where it pleased God of his free mercy to give me twenty-six of the Moravian brethren for companions, who endeavoured to show me 'a more excellent way'" (Wesley, Journal, 32). See also Wesley's letter to Ingham in Clifford W. Towison, Moravians and Methodists (London: Epworth, 1957), 38.

revenge. In the midst of the psalm wherewith their service began, the sea broke over, split the main-sail in pieces, covered the ship, and poured in between the decks, as if the great deep had already swallowed us up. A terrible screaming began among the English. The Germans calmly sung on. I asked one of them afterwards, 'Was you not afraid?' He answered, 'I thank God, no.' I asked, 'But were not your women and children afraid?' He replied mildly, 'No; our women and children are not afraid to die.'¹⁷

To us the danger of such a situation makes Wesley's envy of the simple trust of the Moravians an understandable thing. But for Wesley -- and his generation -- this event had far greater significance than that.

Jaroslav Pelikan has detailed how the overcoming of the fear of death was a particular sign and test of the presence of true faith.¹⁸ In the formal Pietist movement especially, true faith not only did not fear death, but actually welcomed and yearned for its coming.

Pietist death devotion, the yearning for death itself, . . . was treated as normal, indeed as normative, for true believers of all ages. Pietist preachers often quoted the words of the apostle Paul, "My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better" (Phil. 1:23).¹⁹

Death was an imitation of Christ, the end of this miserable life, and the gateway to far, far greater things -- perfect, unbroken communion with God, the only true goal

¹⁷Wesley, Journal, 15.

¹⁸Jaroslav Pelikan, Bach Among the Theologians (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 68-71.

¹⁹Pelikan, 70.

of life on either side of death.

But to the formal movement of Pietism and certainly not to the Moravians, do we need to look for the source of this question of faith in the face of death. It was a deeply personal question of Wesley which he brought with him to the boat. And it would linger with him long afterward.

I went to America to convert the Indians but, oh, who shall convert me? Who, what, is he that will deliver me from this evil heart of unbelief? I have a fair summer religion, I can talk well, nay, and believe myself, while no danger is near. But let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled Nor can I say, "to die is gain."²⁰

The fact that these German commoners -- even women and babes! -- could show no trace of fear in the midst of certain death while he, the missionary, trembled beyond control so unnerved the young Wesley that he questioned the very rudiments of his faith and was haunted by the question -- both of faith and of death -- until his famous "heart-warming" experience at Aldersgate.

It is now two years and almost four months since I left my native country in order to teach the Georgians Indians the nature of Christianity. But what have I learned myself in the meantime? Why, what I the least of all suspected, that I, who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God.²¹

From this point on, Wesley and the Moravians entered a

²⁰Wesley, John Wesley, 44.

²¹Wesley, John Wesley, 48.

period of close -- and controversial -- relation. It is controversial not only because of the great importance it has for the future of both the Methodists and Moravians, but also because it would later end in a very nasty break-up. Calm, unbiased assessments of these years and answers to questions like "who influenced whom?" and "how much?" are difficult to determine because the first-hand accounts themselves are passionately charged and highly polemical. I believe that it can be best described as a period of "tutelage and testing."

Wesley's sympathies towards the Moravians and his desire to learn from them are clear. Wesley was launched on an intense enterprise of searching, first picking the mind of Bishop Spangenberg in Georgia, then pursuing the Moravian leader, Peter Bohler, back in England, and even journeying to Germany to see Herrnhut and to learn first-hand of the Count and of the center of Moravian belief. In some ways, Wesley was a student of the Moravians but the subject -- while, by no means, being untheological -- was not precisely about theological doctrine. It was more a spirituality, a way of believing that Wesley was pursuing rather than a system of beliefs.²² In a way, the various Moravians served more as pastoral counselors than as actual intellectual

²²Ronald Knox, Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), 408.

instructors. The issues were more about the feelings that accompany faith (peace, assurance, confidence in the face of death) than the doctrines that inform it. "At this precise moment," writes Ronald Knox, "he [Wesley] stood in urgent need of spiritual direction."²³

In other ways, the relation between Wesley and the Moravians was one of equal partners, comrades in fellowship and even mission rather than one of teacher-student or counselor-patient. On May 1, 1738, the Wesleys and Peter Bohler formed "our little society" in James Hutton's bookshop which later became the famous Fetter-Lane Society.²⁴ The society had a commonly agreed upon set of rules, but, again, "the proportionate part played by the Wesleys and Bohler is not clear."²⁵ For instance, the rules were written by Wesley but under the advisement of Bohler. But it appears that it was a common venture of the Moravians and "Methodists" -- and, in fact, that commonality was supposed to be a hallmark of the society especially to the point where distinctions ought to disappear.²⁶

²³Knox, 468.

²⁴Wesley, Journal, 28-9.

²⁵Towlson, 62.

²⁶ "For the present it is enough to point out the friendly relations which existed between the Wesleys and the Brethren, and to emphasize that at this time all the members claimed to belong to the Church of England. They

This "little society" was no insignificant club of private pietists. Out of the turbulent waters that swirled around it gushed the potent rivers that were to launch the Great Awakenings in both England and America. As Clifford Towlson states, George Whitefield, the leader-to-be of the Great Awakening in America, also worked, learned and prayed alongside both the Moravians and Methodists. And the intensity and mutuality of that sharing among all of the parties was the distinguishing feature of the society. Here the great names of the times treated each other as equals and as friends.

Then came the famous incident at Aldersgate. Whether it was a "conversion" experience is debatable now. Albert Outler notes:

This has come to be the most familiar event in Wesley's life. It often goes unnoticed, however, that it actually stands within a series of significant spiritual experiences, and is neither first nor last nor most climactic.²⁷

went in a body to St. Paul's Cathedral, headed by Charles Wesley and George Whitefield, to receive the Lord's Supper." Towlson, 64.

²⁷ Outler continues: "There is ample evidence that fixes the year 1738 [the date in question] as the decisive period in Wesley's change from a faith in faith to faith itself, from aspiration to assurance. But the fact remains that the Aldersgate story as such drops abruptly out of sight after its publication in the second Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal (1740). Nor could it be reconstructed or even confirmed from other references in his writings. Moreover, the Aldersgate experience was followed by a long series of spiritual upheavals and frustration which lasted well into the spring of 1739." Wesley, John Wesley, 14.

Writers Garth Lean and V.H.H. Green also emphasize "the continuity in Wesley's life."²⁸

Dr. Green also emphasizes the continuity in Wesley's life. Aldersgate, he says, "made little apparent difference to his theological thinking or to his manner of life."

However, they do point out that:

It was "a crisis of a major order from which Wesley emerged in some sense a changed man, though the characteristic features of his personality were the same as they had previously been." He says what Wesley's conversion provided was "a psychological reassurance." "His confidence and faith in the truth of what he was preaching gave him such strength, such dynamic impetus, that he could now move forward into the life of evangelism which took him in the next half-century to every corner of the British Isles.

Martin Schmidt compares Wesley's conversion at this point to Luther's spiritual trials of Anfechtungen and claims that Aldersgate marks one great point where those tensions were released.²⁹ It is significant, however, that all of these interpretations of the Aldersgate experience in terms which try to avoid understanding it as a "conversion" further underscore the fact that the point of primary concern (or change) between the Moravians and Wesley was not precisely either doctrine nor ethics, but an inward spirituality that is hard to precisely define

²⁸V. H. H. Green, The Young Mr. Wesley (New York: Arnold, 1961); Garth Lean, Strangely Warmed (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1979), 42.

²⁹Martin Schmidt, John Wesley, vol. 1 (New York: Abingdon, 1962), 222.

(especially if one tries to define it apart from all thought, discipline, or psychological process).

In any case, the assurance that Wesley had so intensely pursued but could not give to himself during this period was finally given to him -- and not by the Moravians themselves, but by the public reading of Luther's Preface to the Commentary on Romans -- a fact that again reminds us of the intense Moravian devotion to Luther. Regardless of what may have actually happened, Wesley described the experience in his famous words, "I felt my heart strangely warmed."³⁰ And the event developed into something which would place a great and lasting mark on the history of Christianity that far outweighs the event's importance to Wesley's life, even if such an importance is granted.

As the American Church historian, John Mulder, has encapsulated:

John Wesley's conversion on May 24, 1738 has been widely recognized as an epoch-making date. It marks the beginning of Methodism, a denomination which has exerted a profound influence in Great Britain, the United States, and throughout the world. Signaling the rise of evangelicalism in Christianity, Wesley's conversion is a model of the datable, instantaneous, certain experience of grace that has become so characteristic of some forms of the evangelical movement.³¹

³⁰Wesley, Journal, 30. Notice the use of Moravian terminology of a "warm heart."

³¹Hugh T. Kerr and John M. Mulder, eds., Conversions: The Christian Experience (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 54.

Whether it actually was a conversion or not, Wesley's account became legendary as the prime example of what conversion and "becoming a true Christian" was meant to be. As such it would launch a movement of evangelicalism so great that the fact that it also contributed to the creation of one of the greatest Protestant denominations in the world is a footnote to that event. It is beyond question that this was all not the total fabrication of Wesley's imagination, but the work of Wesley under the heavy influence of the Moravians.

Although experiences such as the founding of the Fetter Lane Society and Aldersgate Incident exhibit the intense and mutual relationship that the Moravians and Wesley shared, we must remember that the "testing" of this period was a two-way street. Wesley's visits to one Moravian leader after another were equally motivated by Wesley's desire to challenge the truth of Moravianism as well as by his hope that that challenge would be fulfilled. Even to Aldersgate that famous evening, Wesley did not go willingly. Before Aldersgate these persistent challenges posed to the Moravians were accepted by Wesley as evidence of his own supposed lack of faith. But after Aldersgate the arrival of his assurance, the questionings did not cease. They, in fact, were more felt because the convenient excuse of his own failure of faith had been removed.

G. T. Kerr and John M. Mulder, eds., Conversions: The Christian Experience (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 54.

Wesley and the Moravians parted company in the most acrimonious and decisive fashion two year later.³² James Hutton later tried to reconcile the two parties by arranging a face-to-face meeting of Wesley and Zinzendorf, but this proved to be an occasion for restating their differences rather than resolving them.³³ From that point on, Wesley was influenced by the Moravians only by his complete and utter revulsion for anything they represented. This pattern of people being both attracted to and then repulsed by the Moravians would not be unique. We shall see it again in the stories of their relations with George Whitefield and Friedrich Schleiermacher. We can only regret that the particularly violent and permanent rupture that Wesley and Zinzendorf experienced makes assessing the exact influence of the Moravians upon Wesley a very difficult matter. It is clear only that an enormous indebtedness -- on both sides to each other -- exists.³⁴ In some ways, Ronald Knox's metaphor that the Moravians were the spark to what was already a highly

³²For detailed accounts of this break, see Towlson, 79-89 and George Forell's very balanced account of the many views on the reasons for the break in his introduction to Zinzendorf, xv-xix.

³³For the actual conversations between these two great figures see Zinzendorf, xvii-xix.

³⁴For one extensive account of the mutual influence, see Towlson, chaps. 7-8, "The Moravian Contribution to Methodism" and "The Methodist Contribution to Moravianism."

combustible material is one of the best (of the simple) accounts of the relation of the two.²⁵

The Moravians and Music

Although one of the Moravians' most significant works begun in America has been the "conversion" (or combustion) of John Wesley, Wesley's subsequent personal influence was felt more powerfully back in the Old World, in England, even though he considered the whole world his parish. America certainly felt the powerful effects of this transformation both denominationally through the Methodist Church and religiously through the birth of a newly defined brand of evangelicalism. But one of Moravianism's more direct but less known (but by no means, less powerful) contributions to American Protestantism and culture lies in the area of music, one of distinguishing marks of the Moravian Church from its beginning.

Ronald Knox quotes R. Jenks saying, "The Brethren rendered three specific services to their time: (1) the great development of congregational music; (2) the inspiration of their deservedly famous foreign missions; (3) the stress which they laid upon education."²⁶ He then comments appreciatively:

The musical tradition, if nothing else, they took over from their Bohemian forefathers. No

²⁵Knox, ch. 19, "The Parting of Friends," 459ff.

²⁶Knox, 403.

less than ten editions of their older hymn-book had appeared between 1501 and 1509.

That hymn book published in 1501 has been called "the first hymnbook ever published"³⁷ and Knox calls them "classics of Protestant literature."³⁸ "The singing church" could be a very apt phrase for this community ever since its inception and that description is one of the ties the Moravian experience with the Good Shepherd ministry at Monterey Park.³⁹

The Moravian tradition for hymnology may go back to the work of John Hus himself, "who composed hymns and taught them to the congregations which gathered for worship in the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague."⁴⁰ But in terms of sheer volume of hymns written, the Moravians would be overwhelming in significance due to two figures in their history: James Montgomery and Count Zinzendorf himself.

³⁷Walser Allen, Who Are The Moravians? (Bethlehem, Pa.: Moravian Church in America, 1952), 87.

³⁸Knox, 404.

³⁹An elder of the Formosan congregation at Good Shepherd once described to me the stereotypes of the different Asian communities. "The Japanese church," he said, "is the thinking church. They produce great theological statements and profound theologians. The Koreans are known as the praying church. They are known for going up on the great mountains and praying their long and deep prayers. But we Formosans are known as the singing church because everything about our church is built around song."

⁴⁰Allen, 87.

James Montgomery was a Moravian and his brother was a Moravian minister.

This author wrote more hymns in common use today (twelve) than any other writer except Charles Wesley (twenty) and [Isaac] Watts (eighteen). . . Out of his work we might almost construct a definition of a hymn: religious verse that expresses the spiritual life in forms of beauty suitable for public worship.⁴¹

Count Zinzendorf was a passionate and prolific hymn-writer, producing over 2000 hymns during his lifetime. Hymn-writing and hymnbook creating were key areas of extending the Church's ministry according to Zinzendorf. As the hymnologist, Bailey writes:

Zinzendorf's influence on hymnody has been significant. Not only did he write hymns all his life -- his first one when he was sixteen and the last at Herrnhut the year of his death -- but he edited and published Moravian hymnbooks constantly. The hymnbooks were taken all over the world, were translated into such languages as Kaffre, Greenlander, North American Indian, Labrador Eskimo, and West Indian Negro, and proved to be the most potent weapon in the arsenal of the missionary.⁴²

"The most potent weapon in the arsenal of the missionary": that would be reason enough for the importance of hymns for Zinzendorf, whose missionary movement was potent in itself. But the singing of hymns for Zinzendorf was an integral part of the Christian life because music is such a natural expression of the "theology of the

⁴¹Albert Edward Bailey, The Gospel in Hymns (New York: Scribner, 1950), 155.

⁴²Bailey, 335.

heart" which he so eloquently preached. It was also an integral part of the Christian community because music and the making of music is not just a product of community or an enrichment of it. It creates community in a particularly powerful way.

Zinzendorf's personal contribution to hymnody is nearly lost today because it has been dwarfed by the success of the Moravian influence on the other Wesley, Charles -- the first of the three most commonly used hymn-writers today.

On that famous voyage of the Simmons, John started translating the Moravian hymns which he discovered just as quickly as he could learn German.

It was the Moravian habit of congregational singing that showed the great organizer, John, how essential was the collecting, editing, publishing and using of hymns as the means par excellence for creating and preserving the fervor which gave Methodism its revolutionary drive. And in turn, Methodist hymnody became a constant though long-resisted influence which finally helped change the Anglican Church from its devotion to the Psalter to its enthusiasm for the historic hymns and to new hymns as an inspiration to Christian living.⁴³

From Moravian to Methodist to the Anglican Church, the influence spread, with John and Charles Wesley as the pivotal figures. Charles alone wrote over 6500 hymns, the first one inspired directly from the Moravians.⁴⁴ Not

⁴³Bailey, 335.

⁴⁴Bailey, 335. See also 73f.

long after Zinzendorf had died, more of Wesley's hymns occupied the Moravians' own hymnbook than Zinzendorf's, their great leader.

The mark of the Moravians on church music, however, extended far beyond the ripple-effect created by their great writers or the Wesley genius. The Moravians had a distinctive approach to music. Not only was music a personal inspiration and a natural expression for "the religion of the heart." Not only did it create community and enrich it. And not only was music held in high esteem in the eyes of the Church. But music actually became a fabric of life. It would be absolutely wrong to compartmentalize its place in either the heart, the church, the choir, or even the community at large. It belonged to life itself. All of that -- the heart, the church, the community, and music -- were inextricably woven together.

Wherever the Moravians were, they used music in their daily life. They sang at meals, in the fields, in the work shops, and while traveling. Hymns helped speed the completion of arduous tasks.⁴⁵

The Moravians were truly a singing community and that distinction left a legacy felt most directly on the American scene.

To the New World the early settlers carried handwritten copies of Hadyn's oratorios, string quartets

⁴⁵Leonard Webster Ellinwood, The History of American Church Music (New York: Morehouse-Gorham, 1953), 345.

and symphonies. In their settlements large collections of music manuscripts were assembled, preserved and constantly performed. Johann Friedrich Peter, a Moravian minister, composed the first known piece of chamber music in the New World. Moravian settlements became known as cultural centers for the colonies. "Research in recent years has disclosed evidence of performances and manuscript copies of works by leading contemporary European composers. . . many of which were not heard elsewhere in America for over a century."⁴⁶ In their contribution to the cultural development of America in music, the Moravians were pioneers extraordinaire.

Another Moravian contribution was in the making of musical instruments. The organs built by Mons Gustavus Hesselius, Johann Gottlob Klemm, and David Tannenberg were used by Moravian, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, and Episcopal congregations for many years; some of them are still preserved in museums or incorporated into their successors. Less known, but still important, were the orchestral instruments made by Moravian craftsmen during the hundred-year period before 1850.⁴⁷

Imagine Lutheran, Roman Catholic, and Anglican congregations (as well as the Moravians) without organs as a fundamental element of worship in the New World!

Above all, the Moravians have become most famous not only for their preservation and promotion of musical instruments and manuscripts, but their name has become

⁴⁶Ellinwood, 346.

⁴⁷Ellinwood, 347.

almost synonymous with the preservation and promotion of one major composer, Johann Sebastian Bach, "the fifth evangelist" himself.⁴⁸

Since the mid-nineteenth century, the name Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, has become synonymous with that of Johann Sebastian Bach, due to the traditions of Moravian choral music and the talents of the Moravian Church organist, John Frederick Wolle.⁴⁹

In 1900 the Bethlehem settlement performed the first complete presentation of Bach's B Minor Mass in America.

The annual Bach Festivals since 1912 have made Bethlehem a musical Oberammergau in America. Among the two hundred or more participants each year have been farmers and city dwellers, steel workers, carpenters, professors, women from the mills, homes, schools, and offices. Almost all of the singers are still church members, and their devotion permeates the Festival, giving the music a spiritual glory in keeping with its heritage.⁵⁰

The Moravian attachment to Bach as "the fifth evangelist" was a natural one even if Bach had no attachment to Moravianism. Bach and Zinzendorf were contemporaries, but Bach's librettist considered the Count to be "the apostle of Satan."⁵¹ This attitude prevented neither the Moravians from appreciating Bach to his fullest nor did it prevent Bach from being profoundly

⁴⁸See, for example, Pelikan, Bach, 57.

⁴⁹Ellinwood, 347.

⁵⁰Ellinwood, 348.

⁵¹Pelikan, Bach, 56.

influenced by the general Pietistic movement.⁵² Bach, however, is probably better understood as a progeny of the Lutheran Reformation first of all. And, here again, we see the paths of the Moravians and Martin Luther crossing in ways far more in harmony than in contradiction.

As Friedrich Smend has said, Bach's cantatas "are not intended to be works of music or art on their own, but to carry on, by their own means, the work of Luther, the preaching of the word and of nothing but the word." For Bach's relation to the heritage of Luther's Reformation was, to borrow an Aristotelian distinction, formal as well as material: not only did much of the content of his work ultimately derive from the heritage of the Reformation; but the principles of worship, as these had been worked out by Luther and his generation, provided much of the context for that work as well.⁵³

"It was the genius of Bach," writes Jaroslav Pelikan, "that he brought together, already in the cantatas and then on a larger scale in the Passions, these two Reformation elements: the text of the Gospel in Luther's translation and the Lutheran chorale."⁵⁴

Music as Crucial to the Interpretation of the Moravians and the Reformation

Here we truly begin to see the full significance of the Moravians' devotion to music and its inestimable effect on the history of the Protestant church especially

⁵²For an excellent description of the precise relation of Bach to pietism, see Pelikan, Bach, 56ff.

⁵³Pelikan, Bach, 26.

⁵⁴Jaroslav Pelikan, Jesus Through the Centuries (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 163.

In America. Until now, we may have looked upon the Moravians' contributions to music as a laudable, perhaps even amazing (considering the size of the body of the Moravians) cultural achievement, but little more. We take the place of music in society and in the church for granted. But that was not at all the case when the Moravians were making their mark upon the American religious scene.

The Reformation of Luther had raised new possibilities, but also new questions about the status of music, the nature of worship, and the relation of both to the community and faith.

Luther himself held music in the highest possible esteem.

Next after theology I give to music the highest place and the greatest honor. I would not exchange what little I know of music for something great. Experience proves that next to the Word of God only music deserves to be extolled as the mistress and governess of the feelings of the human heart.⁼⁼

How clear are the echoes between Luther in this passage and Zinzendorf when it comes to "the mistress and governess of the feelings of the human heart!"

Music is a fair and lovely gift of God which has often wakened and moved me to the joy of preaching. . . I have no use for cranks who

⁼⁼Roland Bainton, Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther (Nashville: Abingdon, 1950), 341.

despise music, because it is a gift of God. Music drives away the Devil."⁵⁶

Out of this high devotion to music flowed some of the greatest revolutions in the church wrought by Luther. Though this area is not without debate, Theodore G  r  ld has called Luther "the Father of Protestant music in Germany."⁵⁷

Thanks to his fundamentally religious mind, combined with genuine artistic feeling, as well as to his energy and determination, he succeeded in laying the foundations of a type of music which not only became an essential element in the Protestant religion, but exerted a beneficial influence upon the whole civilized world."⁵⁸

"The most far-reaching changes in the liturgy," says Roland Bainton, "were with regard to the music, and those at three points: the chants intoned by the priest, the chorals rendered by the choir, and hymns sung by the congregation. Luther set himself to revise all three."⁵⁹ Pelikan adds:

As one of the most profound historians of the modern spirit has observed, the true significance of Luther and the Reformation "cannot be fully appreciated merely on the basis of works of dogmatics. Its documents are the writings of Luther, the church chorale, the sacred music of Bach and Handel, and the structure of community life in the church." One of the planks in the Reformation platform for the renewal of the church was, along with the translation of the Bible into the vernacular and the revitalization of preaching on the basis of

⁵⁶Bainton, 341.

⁵⁷For the debate, see Pelikan, Bach, 18-20.

⁵⁸Pelikan, Bach, 18.

⁵⁹Bainton, 340.

such translations, the composition of vernacular hymns for congregational singing.⁴⁰

Again: the use of music as one of the key "planks of the platform for the renewal of the church" is one of the critical elements of the Reformation employed by the Moravians and seized upon by the Wesleys from them with a force that parallels only Luther's original reform. The resonance between the Moravians and Luther is unmistakable, if not identical.

However, Luther's reform opened up as many questions for music as it solved. It is fortunate, indeed, that the answers which Luther supplied were so positive, enthusiastic, and creative. For others who followed after Luther, particularly from the other great branch of Protestantism, the Reformed Church, the answers were not so obvious, nor so positive. The elevation of "the Word" both written and preached forced a reevaluation of every other mode of communication -- and many who followed the more austere Calvinist line did not share Luther's personal evaluation of the worth of music.

As one recent historian writes concerning not only music but all of the arts and even architecture:

The Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century brought a profound transformation of Christianity in the West, and among its most far-reaching implications was a revolution in the way a portion of the Christian church communicated its faith. For centuries, in a

⁴⁰Pelikan, Jesus, 162.

largely illiterate population, the church "spoke" of the grace of God largely through the medium of images and symbols. The central act of Christian worship -- the mass -- was conducted in a language unintelligible to virtually the entire congregation, and its power lay more in the visual imagery and symbolism of sacrificial love than its verbal persuasiveness of divine grace. What was true for the eucharist was equally true for the entire sacramental system of the late medieval church. The sacraments were the symbolic world of religious meaning, and the church became deeply dependent upon art and symbolism to portray and proclaim the majesty and mystery of divine grace. . . .

It requires, somewhat ironically perhaps, an act of imagination for us in the latter part of the twentieth century to reconstruct this preliterate world of Christian faith and culture, but it is certainly true that for nearly fifteen hundred years the Christian church taught more people about the Bible and the Christian life through symbolism and imagery than through books and words.

The Reformation shattered the synthesis of art and Christianity and undermined the Christian confidence in symbols as reliable ways of embodying or stating Christian truth. The destructive impulse within Protestantism was based on the affirmation of the basic and primary authority of Scripture and subordination of both tradition and experience to the revelation of God's Word in the Bible.⁴¹

Other developments in the "secular" world accelerated the movement of this great transformation:

⁴¹John M. Mulder, "Symbols as Teachers," Theology Today 42, no.2 (July 1985), 190-91. As I have argued, this shattering actually became more true for the Calvinist branch of Christendom (to which Mulder is primarily writing), although the groundwork for the shattering was laid in Luther's revolution in theology. The genius of Bach for music is here made most powerfully clear because of his "re-synthesis" of the Word and the art -- the one art which Luther loved above all.

The invention of the printing press and translation of the Bible into the language of the people spurred the growth of literacy in the West, particularly among Protestant peoples, and encouraged the modern preoccupation with education. As historian Lawrence Stone has suggested, the final result was a dramatic turn in European society as it shifted from a culture of imagery to a culture of words.⁶²

Music, of course, was probably least affected of all the arts since much of it still could be justified as a communication of scripture and words. But in the New World, this trend set loose by the Reformation catapulted ahead at a furious pace. In part, it was due to the nature of the first settlers:

It is difficult for us to realize how extremely narrow-minded our Puritan forebears were towards church music.⁶³

In part, it was due to the circumstances of settling a new world:

The English colonists settled along the coast of North America without any royal subsidies to assist them in transplanting the cultural and religious establishments of their homeland. In fact, the New England colonists wanted none of the Established Church as they had known it in England. The stern business of grubbing a livelihood from the soil discouraged the immigration of any musicians for nearly a century.⁶⁴

But the torrents of revivalism carried the ever-flowing stream at a more ferocious pace.

⁶²Mulder, 191.

⁶³Ellinwood, 297.

⁶⁴Ellinwood, 296.

The evangelical revivals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries exacerbated the Protestant dependence upon the words of the Bible and the words of the preacher. Protestants hotly contested the place and propriety of music and hymns in worship, until music triumphed in all but a few groups seeking to recover the primitive "purity" of early Christianity.⁴⁵

The novelty of the existence -- in fact, prominence -- of a group that cherished both the ideal of recovering pure and primitive Christianity and the virtues of music can now begin to be seen.⁴⁶

Against this background, the Moravian contribution to religion and culture through music was far more than a fine artistic embellishment. It was a dramatic statement with far-reaching consequences, not the least of which was the theological implications -- particularly for the church of the heritage of the Reformation -- on the nature of worship, community, and the communication of the Christian faith. The Moravians certainly did not single-handedly save the American church from an eternity of solemn musical silence, but, even if it was against their nature to engage in the battles themselves, their presence was a critical witness to an age bent on turning in a far

⁴⁵Mulder, 192.

⁴⁶Similar battles over the place of music preceded the one in America: in Germany (where the pietist Spener played a crucial role in its revival) and in England, where Bailey calls the Wesley revolution "epochal." The Moravian influence in America can now be seen in its world context, strongly related to both of these battles as well. Bailey, 79; 329-30.

different way. Today music in church is so taken for granted that, while we might enter a modern-day church that does not have Bibles for the entire congregation, we are very hard pressed to find one without a hymnal in every pew. Imagine the shape of the Mainline Protestant Church today if the twin voices of Puritanism and revivallism were the only voices in the New World. Imagine a religious world which would have developed without the Moravians to collect the manuscripts and print the hymnbooks, make the instruments and demonstrate the intrinsic worth of music to both religion and culture by being the early colonies' cultural centers themselves!

CHAPTER 5

The Moravian Impact on Theology

Certainly, the two most well-known examples of Moravian influence on the Protestant church have been the conversion of the Wesleys and the Moravian dedication to music. But the Moravians have also had a significant impact on the course of modern Protestant theology -- so significant that it deserves a chapter unto itself. We have already seen how even the first examples of influence have had major theological implications, particularly in the Protestant church's interpretation of the reform of Martin Luther. But the Moravians, especially through Count Zinzendorf, have made more direct contributions to the field of theology itself.

This may come to us as a surprise. The Moravians have a reputation of being a-theological or even anti-theological, considering too much preoccupation with dogma argumentative and divisive. "To know nothing except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2)¹ or sola Christi is a key Reformation slogan (and, of course, Paul's) to which the Moravians perhaps are even more keenly attached than Luther himself. They often make a

¹All biblical references are taken from the Revised Standard Version unless specified.

prominent point of declaring that they require the adherence to no specific creed beyond the Apostles' Creed and force no one to accept any special doctrines. It would certainly be foolish to try to argue that in the twentieth century some little-known Moravian author secretly has been the theological equal of a Paul Tillich or a Karl Barth. But it is possible to see a decisive Moravian influence on the shaping of the foundations of what is now considered "modern Protestant theology," particularly through their relationship to those two great formative figures of Friedrich Schleiermacher and even Karl Barth. Insofar as these two figures have dramatically shaped the course of modern Protestant thought, the Moravians have played a crucial role in theology.

But, first, we must take a look at the area of theology that the Moravians historically have been more closely associated with: pietism.

The Moravian Relationship to Pietism

In July 1694. . . there took place what the most authoritative modern encyclopedia of Protestant theology does not hesitate to call "an event of epoch-making significance," the establishment of the University of Halle, which almost immediately became, under the leadership of August Hermann Francke (1663-1727), the major intellectual and theological center of the movement called Pietism.²

A whole new epoch was born not just because one more new theological school was discovered. In some great

²Pelikan, Bach, 56.

sense, Protestantism itself was rejuvenated -- or, at least, a substantial, viable alternative to the current state of Protestantism was presented.

As Kenneth Scott LaTourette has stated the development in its strongest most possible terms:

The Thirty Years' War was a major tragedy. By it much of Germany was laid waste. Prosperous cities and villages were decimated or destroyed and even greater damage was suffered in the coarsening and lowering of morals. As the chief victim, Germany would have seemed to be the last place in Western Europe to which to look for fresh stirrings of Christian life. Yet here, in part from the tragedy itself, came vital currents which, swelling from small beginnings to significant proportions, persisted into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and even in the eighteenth century contributed powerfully to the awakenings elsewhere in Protestantism that after 1750 made that form of the faith the most vigorous and rapidly growing branch of Christianity.³

We noted previously how devastating in particular the Catholic backlash against the Protestants was upon the Unitas Fratrum, virtually wiping them out and forcing them into their period of "the Hidden Seed." But LaTourette notes, "Yet it was within Protestantism, and notably from one of its churches, the Bohemian Brethren or Unitas Fratrum which had been the major victim, that the new tides of life chiefly issued."⁴ Out of this devastation,

³Kenneth Scott LaTourette, A History of Christianity, vols. 1-2 (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 2:894.

⁴LaTourette, 2:894. LaTourette may be over generous in attributing the renewal so prominently to the Moravians. A Pietist scholar like F. Ernest Stoeffler may prefer to find Pietism forming in five distinctive

a grass-roots movement of renewal (both in personal terms and in terms of small groups) emerged.

The establishment of the University at Halle was significant in that it finally gave a center -- and, therefore, a legitimacy and organizational strength -- to the otherwise widespread lay movement. For LaTourette the results of this change would have been epochal enough. Claude Welch, even in describing the difficulty of specifically defining pietism itself admits:

Whether we call them all manifestations of "pietism" or speak of pietism and evangelicalism, it is evident that these were closely related phenomena, so similar and interwoven that interpreters can speak of "a curious uniformity" or even a single evangelical revival sweeping Protestant Europe, Great Britain, and the New World in the height of the Enlightenment.⁵

But theologically it was epoch-making in that it presented an powerful intellectual alternative to the Lutheran orthodoxy of the day. For many, the scholasticism which Luther so mightily fought in Catholicism had simply reappeared in Protestantism in the form which Orthodoxy took at this time.⁶ Pietism

branches, of which the Moravians proved to be one.

⁵Claude Welch, Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century, vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 23.

⁶For a brief account of this development, see Gary Sattler, God's Glory, Neighbor's Good: A Brief Introduction to the Life and Writings of August Hermann Francke (Chicago: Covenant Press, 1982), 8f.

represented a long-sought-after and much-needed corrective to this state of affairs. Unfortunately, it was also an extreme corrective.

This new epoch created by Pietism is the contribution theologically that Moravianism and Count Zinzendorf especially are most often connected with. The Unitas Fratrum obviously existed long before the movement of Pietism came to be, but Zinzendorf was born and bred in the heavy vapors of this Pietism, studying at Halle and being the godson of Philipp Jacob Spener, another principal founder of the movement with Francke. To many, Zinzendorf himself represented the high-water mark of the entire Pietistic movement because of the intensity of the Christ-mysticism that he so virulently fashioned and proclaimed. But as with all things with Zinzendorf, we must be wary of such total identification of the Count with almost anything. Zinzendorf was definitely unique and he always seemed to create strong love-hate relationships with every movement that was not his.

Count Zinzendorf was in fact a significant religious figure of his time. We have already discussed the "praise" attributed to Zinzendorf by his enemies regarding his attachment to Luther. His admirers obviously also could not overlook his genius.

The men of the nineteenth century generally admired him. Johann Gottfried Herder wrote in 1802, that "Zinzendorf departed the world as a conqueror who had few equals and none in the

century past." Goethe described Zinzendorf and his movement most positively and wrote in Dichtung und Wahrheit: "That I eventually moved further and further away from this confession [the Moravian] was actually because of the great seriousness and passionate love with which I had tried to grasp it." Zinzendorf was one spokesman of the Christian faith who seriously appealed to this generally caustic critic of the religious establishment of his time.⁷

The twentieth century, too, has not been without Zinzendorf admirers. Jaroslav Pelikan has recently surveyed the great images of Jesus Through The Centuries, including "The Bridegroom of the Soul" as one of them.⁸ In Protestantism, the name of Zinzendorf is virtually synonymous with the creation of that image and his other famous description of Christ as the Lamb of God.

In 1962, two hundred years after Zinzendorf's death, Karl Barth discovered the vitality of the Count. Writing in a letter to a friend, Barth says, "I am reading among other things the London sermons of Zinzendorf (in a 1756 edition, the year of Mozart's birth) and I take great delight in the onesidedness and bold originality of these works, each of which is far superior to the irksome stuff turned out by the Ebelings, Fuchsers, etc."⁹ As we shall see, this assessment of Zinzendorf would be one of Barth's

⁷George Forell in Zinzendorf, vii.

⁸Pelikan, Jesus, ch. 10.

⁹Karl Barth, Letters: 1961-1968, eds. Jurgen Fangmeyer and Hinrich Stoevesandt. Trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 62.

more mild expressions of applause for value of his work to modern theology.

The debate over the meaning of Zinzendorf for modern theology continues today. As Ernest Stoeffler neatly summarizes its development: "It was Albrecht Ritschl's famous account of the whole Pietistic Movement (1886) which first brought into focus the entire problem of Zinzendorf interpretation."¹⁰ "Henceforth the question was whether the founder of Moravianism was basically a disciple of Luther or of the Christian mystics." The very fact that a debate could be waged over whether a person was the epitome of Lutheranism or the high-water mark of pietism has to be considered a tribute to a person who clearly has left a deep and lasting impression on both great traditions.

If Zinzendorf's impact on theology is so significant, why is the Moravian contribution to theology so neglected today?

One major reason is the eclipse of Pietism as the major alternative to orthodoxy and the end of this epoch-making era with the dawning of another new age.

Other reasons lie with Zinzendorf himself.

Zinzendorf was a genius, but he was an eccentric genius. He was brilliant for his fertility of mind, but

¹⁰F. Ernest Stoeffler, ed., German Pietism During the Eighteenth Century (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 142.

the same explosive creativity also produced enormous quantities of bizarre, wayward, even flagrantly repulsive material as well. Especially during the period of his life universally called "the Sifting Time," Zinzendorf routinely wounded himself with spastic bursts of theology that alternated between the maudlin and the grotesque. A considerable amount of just plain, tasteless drivel -- "the monotonous sentimentalism which disfigures Moravian literature"¹¹ -- was produced, too. This distractive quality to his writing makes reading his original works a feat in itself.

Moreover, while a theologian like Karl Barth may be far from perfect, it takes the fullest powers of our minds to present a substantive critique of his theology. With Zinzendorf, however, we have a person who threw fodder for his own criticism to his enemies by the bushel-load. He could be easily labelled as a Patripassionist, an Antinomian, a Christomonist, and other extreme, heretical terms. Even among his sympathizers, Zinzendorf is so broad that he can be variously claimed as "an enthusiast," a "pietist," or a "mystic." Even to the Moravians themselves, Zinzendorf may be lauded as the savior of the dying church or condemned as the one who fixed an albatross upon their necks with his "Sifting Time." Theologically, Zinzendorf was quixotic, volitale,

¹¹Knox, 409.

and charismatic, capable of displaying the child-like simplicity of the Moravian folk at one moment and the childish egocentricity of his spoiled rich upbringing in the next.

It is questionable whether Zinzendorf saw this streak in his character. In fact, Zinzendorf probably saw the streak and liked what he saw. He was "a genius for extravagance" he liked to call himself. And that self-description is probably as crucial to the understanding of the Count as both his Lutheranism and Pietism. In order to understand Zinzendorf, one must understand the roots of his extremism; and in order to bring Zinzendorf into the modern age, an adjustment must be made to filter his extremism out. It is unlikely that Zinzendorf as he stands historically will ever bring a renewal to the continuing Protestant tradition. His contribution will stand, at best, within the epoch of Pietism. But it will be a valuable contribution nonetheless. Stoeffler writes:

In general it may be said, then, that Zinzendorf was one of the truly great men in the history of Protestantism. His impact upon the religious life and thought of a substantial number of people during his own age is beyond question, while the larger implications of his contribution to man's total history will be a subject of discussion for a long time to come.¹²

¹²Stoeffler, Continental Pietism, 167.

Schleiermacher and the Moravians

New eras in theology are an easy thing to proclaim. The establishment of the University of Halle may or may not deserve the full weight of that distinction. Only history will decide. But there is another dawning of a new era that is much easier to proclaim with confidence and sustain. It is the dawning of the era of truly modern theology brought about by the theology of Friedrich Schleiermacher.

No one has lauded the achievement of Schleiermacher as a quantum leap for all theology more than his later nemesis, Karl Barth.

The older Gass, impressed by a reading of Schleiermacher's Doctrine of Faith, once wrote to its author saying: 'There is no one who can make me waver in my belief that your dogmatics herald a new era, not only in this one discipline, but in the whole study of theology in general.' And A. Neander went even further, saying to his students on the day after Schleiermacher's death: 'From him a new period in the history of the Church will one day take its origin.'¹²

"These prophecies have been fulfilled," declared Barth. "The first place in a history of the theology of the most recent times belongs and will always belong to Schleiermacher, and he has no rival."

Barth goes on to say:

What he said of Frederick the Great in his Academy address entitled "What goes to make a great man" applies also to himself: "He did not

¹²Karl Barth, Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century (Valley Forge: Judson, 1973), 426.

found a school, but an era." . . . In the theological field it was nevertheless his century. After describing all sorts of curves, both great and small, it none the less always returned to him. His influence did not decrease, it increased as time went on, and his views established themselves more and more. He was studied, honored and made fruitful much more in 1910 than in 1830.

Such is not just Karl Barth's opinion (the opinion, by the way, of a person who then spends even greater space trying to convince his readers -- or himself? -- that Schleiermacher deserves to be considered Christian!). It has been the universal assessment of Schleiermacher's significance even to today, nearly at the end of yet another century. This is the legacy of a person born eight years after Count Zinzendorf died.

What then does Friedrich Schleiermacher have to do with the Moravian Church?

First, it was his era that eclipsed their old one characterized by Pietism. Schleiermacher's theology is considered truly epoch-making mostly because of what it did for the future of theology, enabling it to break through into the modern civilized era. But it is also the dawning of a new era because of what it did to the past of theology. He reconfigured its entire terrain. To the old alternatives of Pietism vs. Orthodoxy, Schleiermacher did not merely add a third alternative, somewhat more moderate than either of those two. (Though some might see his thought as merely mediating in nature, they underestimate

his value.) Schleiermacher did not merely find a middle ground; he sought a higher ground that would render both previous extreme alternatives obsolete. By presenting a theological alternative to Orthodoxy that was both intellectually stronger and able to embrace the modern world, Schleiermacher especially made Pietism intellectually unnecessary, even though Pietism as a lay movement continued long after its theological prominence was spent.

But Schleiermacher's significance to the Moravians is far greater than his era signaling the end of theirs. To a significant degree, Schleiermacher's overwhelming success in eclipsing Pietism and achieving a higher ground is due, not at all to his ability to refute their claims. Part of his genius is his ability to steal their thunder, to embrace their key contributions and raise them to a higher ground. The theological task which we ended with in the last chapter -- that of filtering out the dross in Moravian theology and raising it to a new level -- may have seemed like a novel idea, the idle thoughts of a wishful mind. But in a very real way, that is nothing new. That is one part of Schleiermacher's genius. And, insofar as Friedrich Schleiermacher is the father of modern theology, it is part of the creation of the foundations of that great enterprise that theologians continue to wrestle with even though the Moravian labels

have long since fallen off.

Friedrich Schleiermacher was influenced decisively by the Moravians. His father, a Prussian court chaplain, experienced a renewal of faith under the influence of the Moravian community at Gnadenfrei "and resolved to educate his son in the Moravian environment. It was at Gnadenfrei, in 1783, that Friedrich underwent the religious awakening which he described in later years as the beginning of his awareness of a 'higher order.'"¹⁴ He also started his theological training at the Moravian seminary at Barby.

Like Wesley and Zinzendorf himself, Schleiermacher's appreciation of the Moravians was centered not in the Count's theology so much as in the piety of the common Moravians whom he met. Also like Wesley and others, Schleiermacher later rebelled against the Moravians in an affair involving "a painful rupture of relationship with his father."¹⁵ Unlike Wesley, however, Schleiermacher could return to the Moravian spirit -- though not its fold -- and later found power in many of the dimensions of the Moravianism he once loved and then rejected.

In a letter to G. Riemer in 1802, Schleiermacher wrote: "I can say that in all these things I have become a

¹⁴C. W. Christian, Friedrich Schleiermacher (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1979), 32.

¹⁵Christian, 33.

Moravian again, but of a higher order."¹⁴

That self-description is a deliberately subtle and suggestive phrase that many interpreters have used to inappropriately turn Schleiermacher over to the Moravians wholesale. On the one hand, it does, indeed, indicate Schleiermacher's renewed appreciation of the Moravians and his acknowledgement of his appropriation of "all these things." But, on the other hand, the phrase itself also signifies Schleiermacher's movement away from Moravianism, especially in its cheapest and lowest form, in its petty-piety, blood language, and limited worldview. As a "Moravian of an higher order," Schleiermacher has deliberately left behind elements of Moravianism that he has found distasteful, philosophically shallow, or out-of-step with the modern world.

But there is a further dimension to the phrase that suggests that it means much more than "I, Friedrich Schleiermacher, have borrowed some things from Moravianism and discarded certain others." A transformation has taken place. The Moravianism that Schleiermacher experienced as a youth has been raised to a higher, even more intense degree and something has been created that is almost brand new. As Karl Barth writes of just one aspect of Schleiermacher's theology, "What he made of it . . . was

¹⁴Karl Barth, The Theology of Schleiermacher (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 79.

not a Moravianism merely of a higher, but of the highest order."¹⁷

There is a purifying attempt on Schleiermacher's part, but there is also an attempt to raise what has been purified. In Schleiermacher, two streams collide: one of Moravianism and one of the modern, enlightened world. What collides, combines. And what results is something far more than just an enlightened pietism or a modern philosophy with a touch of feeling. Here is the beginning of a whole new era. In the background of Schleiermacher's key idea for launching the whole new era, the theology grounded in "feeling," we can hear echoes of Zinzendorf's central idea of a "theology of the heart." But Zinzendorf's theology stands as a clay model in the background where Schleiermacher's carefully chiseled concepts take the center stage as the full and solid marble statue, almost defying comparison with the preliminary experiments that prepared its ground.

Precisely what Schleiermacher borrowed from the Moravians and what he left behind is difficult to determine. It is as highly controversial as the extent of their influence on Wesley. In some ways, almost every aspect of Schleiermacher's thought has been touched somehow by the Moravian spirit because of its early grip

¹⁷Barth, Theology of Schleiermacher, 451. I do not agree with Barth, however, about that particular aspect of Schleiermacher's theology.

on him. In other ways, only vestiges of actual Moravian theology can be definitively identified in Schleiermacher -- so thorough was his reworking of the Moravianism he absorbed.

A writer like C. W. Christian can attribute to the Moravians Schleiermacher's emphases on "the profound sense of grace that suffuses his whole theology," the "given-ness" inherent in Schleiermacher's definition of religion in terms of feeling and absolute dependence, and the intense Christocentrism and redemptive emphases about the person of Christ.¹⁸ Richard Niebuhr sees the Moravian influence just as widespread but more in terms of Schleiermacher's life than thought.¹⁹ This is certainly closer in meaning to Schleiermacher's intent behind his actual self-description as a Moravian of an higher order.

A catalogue of the analyses of Schleiermacher in terms of his Moravian background could consume a book in itself. At times it is used as a way of discrediting his work, and at other times it is used to highlight the highly personal character of such a profound intellectual

¹⁸"Intellectually, of course, Schleiermacher's theology of grace owes a debt to his Reformed heritage and to Augustine, but its personal roots seem to be Moravian. Whatever its source, his sense that everything of value in one's consciousness of God -- everything that can rightly be called religion -- comes as 'gift' is very deep." Christian, 36-37.

¹⁹Richard R. Niebuhr, Schleiermacher on Christ and Religion (New York: Scribner, 1964), 133.

work. In any case, Schleiermacher found something of highly significant value in his Moravian roots, however greater he may have considered himself to have transcended them. Or, perhaps it would be better to say, that there was something about Moravianism that would not let go of Schleiermacher. And modern theology owes an enormous debt of gratitude to that "love which would not let him go" for being one of the several formative elements of a truly modern Christian theology.

Karl Barth and the Moravians

Of all the descriptions of Schleiermacher in terms of his Moravian roots, perhaps one of the more interesting ones is that of Schleiermacher's later arch-enemy, Karl Barth. Barth's description is interesting, not because it is necessarily factual or even fair, but it does tell us as much about Barth as it does Schleiermacher and it does confirm certain highlights about the Moravians which we have already briefly discussed.

In Barth's historical assessment of Schleiermacher in his book, Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century, Barth traces Schleiermacher's Moravian roots and agrees that "Schleiermacher sprang from the Moravian brethren, and was certainly correct in once saying of himself that all his life he had been a 'Moravian of a higher order.'²⁰ Barth at this point in his career is certainly

²⁰Barth, Protestant Theology, 451.

among those interpreters of Schleiermacher for whom the mere association with Moravians is considered a questionable, even discrediting affair. In this particular instance, for Barth, this means that "for Schleiermacher being educated and educating must definitely mean mediation -- mediation, uniting vision, synthesis, and peace not only between this and that opposite, but ultimately between all, even between the most pronounced opposites."²¹ This (pathological?) concern for "peace," Barth claims, dominated Schleiermacher's sermons in the last years of his life -- and by "no mere coincidence." This peace and "unity which can be felt . . . is at once identical with the strongest and most decisive lever of Schleiermacher's apologetics."

The Moravian and Romantic was bound to have recourse to this kind of apologetics and to no other.²²

This "most decisive lever" of Schleiermacher's theology Barth sees as the most fatal error of Schleiermacher. It "probably helps explain the fact that we cannot reckon, in Schleiermacher, with an ultimate opposition between God and man, between Christ and Christian."²³ By making "this error" Schleiermacher was "destroying Reformation

²¹Barth, Protestant Theology, 450-1.

²²Barth, Protestant Theology, 453.

²³Barth, Protestant Theology, 473.

theology."²⁴ In fact, his (supposedly) ultra-Moravian lever "challenged the decisive premise of all Christian theology in a way which had not been known, perhaps since the days of the ancient Gnostics."

Nowhere is Barth's antipathy towards Schleiermacher shown more openly than at this "decisive" point. For Barth, "the ultimate opposition between God and man" is the "decisive premise of all Christian theology." Compare Barth's famous comments on his theology in preface to the second edition of The Epistle to the Romans:

My reply is that, if I have a system, it is limited to a recognition of what Kierkegaard called the "infinite qualitative distinction" between time and eternity, and to my regarding this as possessing negative as well as positive significance: "God is in heaven, and thou art on earth." The relation between such a god and such a man, and the relation between such a man and such a God, is for me the theme of the Bible and essence of philosophy.²⁵

And, according to Barth, for Schleiermacher, unity and peace is the decisive (and horribly wrong) theme -- all because of the Moravians. Barth's assessment here is certainly passionate and reveals more about Barth than Schleiermacher, but it does cast an interesting light upon the Moravians. What a tragedy that peace rather than absolute and unqualified animosity should be chosen as the decisive theme of the Bible, Christianity, and the essence

²⁴Barth, Protestant Theology, 473.

²⁵Karl Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, trans. Edwyn Hoskyns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), 10.

of philosophy!

But this particular excerpt of Protestant Theology is not the only provocative part of Barth's assessment of Schleiermacher in light of the Moravian influence.

Earlier in the winter semester of 1923-24, Barth lectured on The Theology of Schleiermacher, taking great pains to examine his theology to its fullest extent and with the greatest sympathy.²⁶ In it, Barth makes some fairly interesting comments on the key points (as he sees them at this earlier time) in Schleiermacher's theology and their relation to the Moravians.

For Schleiermacher's redemption-centered theology, Barth has some good words to say about Schleiermacher, but he attributes it almost wholesale to the Moravians (as if it were too good to come from Schleiermacher himself).

In continuation of the definition of the nature of Christianity previously mentioned, 11,3 says that what distinguishes Christianity from other religious societies to which the concept of redemption is not alien is (1) that this and the antithesis posited with it are not just one individual religious element like others but that all other pious movements relate to them (a genuinely Pietist-Moravian statement) and (2) that redemption is posited as something that has been accomplished universally and completely by Jesus of Nazareth; the two points cannot be separated from one another but belong essentially together.²⁷

Yet Schleiermacher's Christocentrism cannot be Moravian,

²⁶The German edition of Barth's Protestant Theology was printed in 1947.

²⁷Karl Barth, Theology of Schleiermacher, 198.

according to Barth. Neither can it be from Schleiermacher himself! It is there simply because it "must" be there:

It is a real Christology. It exists. It is there at a central point. It is tirelessly presented inconstantly new turns. Why? . . . The only reason I can think of is that this is how it has to be in the Christian church. This is how it has always had to be, and always will have to be, in spite of all the extravagancies and caprices and open errors which clever people have committed in every age and always will.²⁸

If Schleiermacher is right -- but not responsible for the Christocentrism in his theology, Barth is equally unequivocal that the content of the Christology that does exist is filled with errors. And the source of "the erroneous content of Schleiermacher's Christology" Barth believes to be the Moravians.²⁹

But to this relation, to his particular piety with its background of a gentle waft of Zinzendorf, I would rather ascribe the erroneous content of Schleiermacher's Christology. I cannot go into that here, but I believe that the intolerable humanizing of Christ that triumphed under the aegis of Schleiermacher in the 19th century was very closely related to pietism, especially in the form that it had been given by Zinzendorf.³⁰

This charge Barth does expound on in his Church Dogmatics 1.2, sixteen years later (1939).³¹ There Barth locates the

²⁸Barth, Theology of Schleiermacher, 106.

²⁹Barth, Theology of Schleiermacher, 160.

³⁰Barth, Theology of Schleiermacher, 160.

³¹Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, eds. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, trans., G. T. Thomson and Harold Knight (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1978), 1/2: 136-38.

source of the Life-of-Jesus Movement in Zinzendorf's devotion to Jesus, especially the flesh of Jesus -- another interesting comment considering Barth's intentional snubbing of Schleiermacher's pivotal role in this area and the fact that the enterprise soon became motivated far more by rationalist concerns than pietism.

And, again, Barth finds Schleiermacher's failure to have a "real" cross in his theology as a stumbling block and judgment on the world to be rooted in his Moravianism.

Obviously in interpreting these Good Friday sermons all memory of the depiction of the crucifixion at Grunewald must be obliterated if this is possible; otherwise we shall be filled from the very outset with indignation and even disgust at the innocuousness -- or already no longer innocuousness -- with which the cross is made a symbol of peace for the German home and our relation to it is made into one of inspired uplift after the idealistic manner of Biedermeyer. It is shattering to have to say that, so far as I at least can see, the eloquent dialectic which is at work here never found occasion even in the presence of this subject to halt for once with fear and trembling and to abandon the everlasting Christ and We, and We and Christ, in an attitude of qualified reverence. Neither the younger nor the older Schleiermacher can achieve this. The familiar handling of the Savior, and especially the crucified Savior, which was so typical of the older Brethren, is something that Schleiermacher never lost in spite of his leaving that communion. In this and other matters he simply became "a Moravian of a higher order," as he himself put it. Hence we had better forget Grunewald and the Middle Ages and the Reformation if we are not to be angered here.³²

Again: what a trenchant and heavy-handed indictment of

³²Barth, Theology of Schleiermacher, 78-9.

Schleiermacher, the Moravians, and their mutual relation!

We shall look back at these comments on the connection of Schleiermacher and the Moravians with even more surprise once we examine the writings of the later Barth. But, before we do, one other area of Barth's early analysis of Schleiermacher is very interesting, especially since it highlights two intensely Moravian themes but the Moravians themselves are not mentioned. This area of theology Barth also considers crucial (of course!) to the whole of dogmatics.

According to Barth (quoting Dilthey approvingly^{aa}), Schleiermacher's Christmas Eve Dialogues is "the best introduction to the study of his dogmatics." The central theme of this crucial theological piece Barth declares to be: music and the eternal feminine.

One should not in any way overlook the literary and, indeed, the highly theological significance of this final page with its gentle triumphing over all earthly heaviness. Music and the eternal feminine are in no sense mere adornment in Schleiermacher's Christmas Eve. Somewhat epigrammatically I might venture the thesis that they are the real theological substance of this little masterpiece -- for this is what it is no matter what view we take of its contents.

Barth's reasons for this conclusion are many:

Music: Not for nothing was it Dulon's flute concert, as we have seen, that inspired Schleiermacher to write this work in 1805. Whenever there was singing during the conversation, there came at once "some silent

^{aa}Barth, Theology of Schleiermacher, 57.

moments when all knew that the heart of each was directed lovingly to the others and to something higher still" (p. 10). Not for nothing is it little Sofie with her very significant name who, although definitely inclined toward feminine pursuits, shows a decided talent for music, especially for music "in the grand church style."

It is the women with their stories, with their variations on the mother-child relationship, not the men with their Christology, who in Schleiermacher's mind say what is really essential about Christmas.³⁴

Why music, we may ask?

First, music has a more direct connection with feeling than words can ever have.

"Every feeling," says Eduard, "emerges most fully when we have found the right music for it; not the word, this can only be an indirect expression."

"It is undoubtedly true that church music could dispense, not with the singing, but with specific words. In a Miserere, Gloria, or Requiem, what do the individual words matter? The music may be understood from its own character, and no one can say that he has lost anything if he does not hear the set of words."³⁵

Second -- and related to the first -- music has a quality for penetrating the individual in a way that words are incapable of doing. Schleiermacher continues:

"What the word makes clear, music must make alive."

"Yes, indeed," said Friederike, it is the most religious music that pierces the heart most surely. And it is singing religion, added Karoline, which rises most gloriously and directly to heaven."

³⁴Barth, The Theology of Schleiermacher, 70.

³⁵Barth, Theology of Schleiermacher, 70.

And, third, music does greater justice to the central theme of Christianity than words could ever do.

Again: "Christianity is a single theme presented in infinite variations. . . These two, Christianity and music, must stay close together." [1826: "and a piece of music like Handel's Messiah is for me at the same time a compendious proclamation of the whole of Christianity"].

Why music, one may ask. From all that has been said, the answer is plain: Because the word cannot do justice to what Schleiermacher takes to be the real Christmas miracle. . . the ineffable object and the ineffable joy.³⁴

"We now understand why in Christman Eve music is rated above speech and silent devotion above both."³⁷

Unfortunately, Barth understands Schleiermacher's interpretation of "the real Christman miracle," and "the single theme of Christianity" to be nothing more than "elevated humanity."³⁸ But what is interesting is the extraordinary emphasis Barth perceives in Schleiermacher, particularly in this "little masterpiece," of two distinctively Moravian qualities: their high valuation of both music and women. It is also interesting to see how those two valuations (at least according to Barth) profoundly shape and define the manner and status of theology itself. Barth does not want to explicitly say it, but we get the strong feeling that theology would have been

³⁴Barth, Theology of Schleiermacher, 71.

³⁷Barth, Theology of Schleiermacher, 210.

³⁸Barth, Theology of Schleiermacher, 71.

much better off if it were left in the hands of competent men and a large vocabulary of words.

These early comments of Barth about Schleiermacher and the Moravians are interesting even if they are neither very complimentary nor especially fair. They show that Karl Barth, at least, shares the opinion that at several critical junctures in the foundation of modern Protestant theology, the influence of the Moravians can be seen. But with Schleiermacher and these critical points (whatever they may be) the Moravian influence on modern theology does not end. In many ways, a new era in modern theology dawned due to the influence of Karl Barth himself. On August 1, 1914, World War I broke out. Also on that day, something happened to change Barth's life.

Ninety-three German intellectuals issued a terrible manifesto, identifying themselves before all the world with the war policy of Kaiser Wilhelm II. . . It was like the twilight of the gods when I saw the reaction of Harnack, Herrmann, Rade, Euchken and company to the new situation.³⁷

That twilight of the gods was turned into the dawning of a new era by the theological energy of that Safenwill pastor, Karl Barth. There is much more to modern Protestant theology than Friedrich Schleiermacher and Karl Barth, but there are few other rivals to the tremendous influence these two people would have.

³⁷Karl Barth, quoted by Eberhard Busch, Karl Barth: His Life From Letters and Autobiographical Texts, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 81.

We have seen how negative Barth's early comments on the Moravians have been, particularly because of their relation to Schleiermacher. But in 1952 a radical change was to occur. In this momentous year, the Moravians mysterious power began to gain a grasp on Barth himself until it reached a point at the end of his life when a renaissance of Zinzendorf study was to originate from none other than Barthian circles.

On Christmas Eve Karl Barth wrote a letter to Rudolf Bultmann, perhaps the third great figure to shape the major questions of twentieth-century Protestant theology. In that letter, Barth declared his drastic disagreements which he had with the New Testament theologian.

Barth complains: "You cannot ask me to do a 180 degree turn and follow you."⁴⁰ Bultmann consistently has failed to grasp the key to Barth's theology:

"You do not know where my special interest -- for my part with some persistence -- lies."

Considering Bultmann's incurable blindness, Barth decides to let him in on "his secret":

At the risk of more headshaking and displeasure I will at any rate venture to whisper one thing to you, namely, that I have become increasingly a Zinzendorffian to the extent that in the NT only the one central figure as such has begun to occupy me -- or each and everything else only in the light and under the sign of this central figure.

⁴⁰Karl Barth, Karl Barth-Rudolf Bultmann Letters, 1922 to 1966, ed. Bernd Jaspert, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 107.

Barth then declared to Bultmann what would form his famous formula for the structure of his monumental Church Dogmatics:

As I see it, one can and should read all theology in some sense backwards from it [the Zinzendorflan figure of Christ]: down to anthropology, ethics, and then methodology. This is what I have attempted and am still attempting. I have not become "orthodox" for this reason.

Here is the midst of a letter swirling with debate about key issues of modern theology -- existentialism and theology, objectification versus subjectification, kerygma and myth, the understanding of God and the proper method of biblical exegesis and theology -- here Barth draws out the highly controversial personage of Count Zinzendorf as the key to the whole of his position and the one element that prevents him from being neo-orthodox. And the issue that Barth aligns himself with Zinzendorf on is his radical Christocentrism -- the very Christocentrism that Barth refused to attribute to either Schleiermacher or the Moravians six years before.

It appears that in the great stare-down between Barth and the Moravians over Christocentrism, Barth blinked (probably the only time in his life he ever did!). From this point forward, the Moravians are no longer the weak link in the theology of the Father of all modern theology. They are a group of people whom Barth appreciates (which is a rarity in itself) -- and appreciates more and more as

time goes on. Until this point, Karl Barth has rather considered himself a lone voice crying in a wilderness, but now he begins to realize that echoes of that voice of salvation can be heard coming from a previous age and a previous people who had been largely written off years ago. Make no mistake, however: the Moravians do not effect a change of course in Barth. They only solidify and bring into sharper relief positions which he was already forming at the time when his opinion of their value changed.

Tracing Barth's comments on Count Zinzendorf in the Church Dogmatics is an enlightening affair.

In book 1/1, with its emphasis on the Trinity as the starting point of theology rather than the appendix (à la Schleiermacher), not a mention is made of either the Moravians or Zinzendorf.

In 1/2 (written in 1939), Barth lays out the charges linking Zinzendorf with the quest for the historical Jesus which he hinted at in his lectures on Schleiermacher years earlier.⁴¹

Then in 2/2 we find Barth's first positive comment. In his section on The Command of God as Claim of God: the content of the divine claim, Barth argues that obedience to Jesus Christ and Christ alone is the content of this claim and command.

⁴¹Karl Barth, Dogmatics, 1/2: 137.

Everyone is bound to this first and last. Submission to all other demands, even if made in the name of God, can only be provisional and not binding and it always involves the risk of error. . . . It is well to consider the matter in this simplest possible formulation. All explanations of what it means in detail can only return continually to this simplest formula. . . . The name of Jesus is itself the designation of the divine content of the divine claim, of the substance of God's Law. We cannot hurry past Him. We cannot treat Him as though He Himself were not this substance.⁴²

Zinzendorf himself had been instantly vilified for using almost the same words in his time as Barth uses here, especially the notion of putting Christ above God. And, in fact, Barth proceeds to defend Zinzendorf as another Athanasius contra mundum.

The concentration and intensity with which this was continually said by Nicolas von Zinzendorf was amply justified. He said it in opposition not only to a secularised orthodoxy, and not only to the Enlightenment, but also to the moral and mystical ambiguities of the Pietism of his time. In so doing, he re-established not merely a Reformation but a New Testament insight. We may be astonished at baroque features in the way in which he said it. And we may argue that, entangled in certain Lutheran ideas, he did not say it universally enough. But we must give him credit that he was one of the few not only of his own time but of all times who have said it so definitely and loudly and impressively.⁴³

It is hard to decide which is more impressive: Barth's radically Christocentric (Christomonist?) ethic even to the point of excluding claims "In the name of God" and yet

⁴²Barth, 2/2, 568.

⁴³Barth, 2/2: 568. Emphasis is mine.

including the Moravian virtue of simplicity or Barth's stalwart defense of Zinzendorf himself, claiming that his only error was that he did not shout his ethic loudly enough! Here is Zinzendorf at one of the most crucial points of Barth's ethics. And this is in 1942, over ten years before Barth would confront Bultmann in his Christmas Eve letter with his allegiance to the Count in the interpretation of the Bible and the structure of his theological method.

Then in volume four of the Church Dogmatics, the references to Zinzendorf become more frequent, also with equally crucial portions of Barth's theological program.

In 4/1, Zinzendorf is mentioned five times. On page 273, Barth brings to a conclusion his argument for what Jesus Christ has done for us, his pro nobis, Theologia crucis, and doctrine of reconciliation.

All theology, both that which follows and indeed that which precedes the doctrine of reconciliation, depends upon this theologia crucis. . . . There is no avoiding this strait gate. There is no other way but this narrow way. If the nail of this fourfold "for us" does not hold, everything else will be left hanging in the void as an anthropological or psychological or sociological myth, and sooner or later it will break and fall to the ground.⁴⁴

Barth chooses forensic categories for interpreting what Christ has done for us, but one other category of interpretation deserves "special appraisal," he says in

⁴⁴Barth, 4/1, 273.

his fine print.⁴⁵ He calls it "cultic" and asks whether it is not "the most primitive Christianity, because of its great nearness to the Old Testament."

What Barth means by "cultic" has to do with the terms "Lamb of God" and "Blood of Christ." In other words, it is "Zinzendorf, whose theology of blood I have not really been trying to avoid."⁴⁶ Zinzendorf's language is not only more primitive than Barth's -- "so very important in New Testament thinking" -- it is equivalent to it.

What we have tried to say in another way, if it is said correctly, cannot be anything other than that which could and can be said in the images and categories of cultic language. It would therefore bode ill for our results if we could not recognise them in the mirror of this other language in which it was so important to the men of the New Testament to think and speak.⁴⁷

Thereupon Barth launches into nine pages of fine print reinterpreting his pro nobis in Zinzendorf's sacrificial terms. The chief reason Barth cites for not using this language is that "the form is now rather remote from us."⁴⁸

Not only does Barth respect Zinzendorf for his content or categories for interpreting the doctrine of reconciliation; he gives even higher acclaim to Zinzendorf for the place that he gives it in his theology.

⁴⁵Barth, 4/1: 274.

⁴⁶Barth, 4/1: 275.

⁴⁷Barth, 4/1: 275.

⁴⁸Barth, 4/1: 275.

On this point Barth considers himself following Luther.

It was again Luther, above all others, who obviously regarded and described the doctrine of justification as the Word of the Gospel. To him it was not merely the decisive point, the hub, as it were, of the whole of Evangelical theology in controversy with the Romanists. It was this. . . primus et principalis articulus in this special sense: "In relation of this article we cannot doubt or yield an inch, though heaven and earth or all things passing may fall. . . On this article stands all that we teach and live against the Papacy, the devil and the world. Therefore we must be sure and not doubt. Otherwise all is lost, and Papacy and devil and all will prevail against us."⁴⁹

Barth then points out that the entire history of Lutheran dogmatics after Luther is an abandonment or neglect of this most central thesis of Luther. Not even Melanchthon was faithful to this ideal.⁵⁰ Only Martin Kahler "dared actually to plan and organize Evangelical dogmatics around the doctrine of justification as a centre."⁵¹ And only three others -- all non-Lutherans -- lived and preached Luther's hub as no one else did. But they were not theologians "in the narrower sense." They were Bernese Samuel Lucius, John Wesley, and Count Zinzendorf.

This particular tribute to Zinzendorf is impressive enough, but in volume 4/1, page 683, we find Barth's most famous tribute to the Count, the passage most often quoted

⁴⁹Barth, 4/1: 521.

⁵⁰Barth, 4/1: 522.

⁵¹Barth, 4/1: 552.

about Zinzendorf.

If appearances are not deceptive, it was the prophetic intention of Count Zinzendorf in the founding of his remarkable "brotherhoods", not to split the confessional Churches, not to replace them by a super-Church, but as they came together freely as loyal members of the particular Churches to confront them typically with unity which they had not lost and actually could not lose in Jesus Christ Himself, who remarkably enough was elected their common Elder Brother. It is no accident that the very man who in his preaching and poetry and dogmatics (so far as he had any) was perhaps the only genuine Christocentric of the modern age (fools would say: Christomonist), must also perhaps be called the first genuine ecumenicist, i.e., the first really to speak and think wholly in terms of the matter itself.

"The only genuine Christocentric of the modern age" and "the first genuine ecumenicist" -- praise does not come any higher than that, especially from the one whom most consider invented Christocentrism in his radical way. Again: Zinzendorf is portrayed as the only true and faithful Daniel in the land of Nebuchadnezzar, the only brave and visionary soul to completely realize the really vital, life-and-death issues of theology and to preach them against a world full of scoffers.

Finally, on page 756, Barth returns to the theme of the pro me and shows how Zinzendorf left the fold of Pietism over another critical issue and did so out of a deeper fidelity to the Reformation than any one else and as the only forerunner of Barth's theological recovery of that true faith.

In the Church Dogmatics 4/1, finished during the year

after Barth's Christmas Eve letter to Bultmann, Zinzendorf can do no wrong except exhibit some poor style, bad taste, and not be a theologian in the strictest sense of the word. Again and again, Zinzendorf is precisely right and the only one right on the most critical issues of the Reformation faith. He is the only one who has boldly advanced upon the path which Martin Luther began.

In 4/2 and 4/3, a touch of sobriety settles upon Barth. However, his one comment in 4/2 involves Zinzendorf chastising Barth and others for being too sober!

In pages 795-98, Barth admits that theology's criticism of pietism and its insistence on agape love to the total exclusion of eros has been unjustified.⁵² A "pronounced Puritanism" with regard to love took over theology in an over-reaction to Pietism. Barth here is willing to admit a mistake -- to suggest that Zinzendorf was more right than himself in this area of love. If ever an over-reaction should be necessary, intimates Barth, it would be better to over-react in Zinzendorf's direction rather than his own.

If a choice has to be made, is it not better to say a little too much and occasionally to slip up with Nicolai and even with Zinzendorf and Novalis than to be rigidly correct with Kant and Ritschl and my 1921 Romerbrief and Bultmann?⁵³

Not too many people would chose Zinzendorf, Novalis and

⁵²Barth, 4/2, 795.

⁵³Barth, 4/2: 798.

Nicolai over Barth, Bultmann, Kant, and Ritschl!

In 4/3, Barth continues his accolades for Zinzendorf and the Moravians in further areas of the life and faith of the Church. These we will discuss in later portions of this paper.

But in 4/4 the comments reach their absolute zenith.

Consequently, as the thirst-quenching water of the Spirit proceeds from His [Christ's] slain body to be received and drunk by believers, so also does His blood, His life, the eternal life received from Him. This living water does not flow from His slain body without the blood, and especially -- this is the emphasis here -- His shed blood does not flow forth without the living water of the Spirit. The blood and the water, the eternal life and the Holy Spirit, the objective grace and its subjective appropriation -- both flow from the same source. Hence the whole new reality of the Christian community and all its members does so too. What Zinzendorf said about this is right, though less so in the way he often said it. The community and all its members are "born" out of that wound in the side, and they live on that which flows there-from, the blood, i.e., the water which is the Spirit.⁵⁴

Here is Zinzendorf's Blood and Wounds theology, hard-core; here is Moravianism true-blue; and here is the part of Moravianism most frequently, most easily and most cheaply criticized. And, yet, here is Karl Barth celebrating this core -- and celebrating it, not as an aberration of his theology, but in terms of vintage Barth: object and subject flowing from the same source.

The appreciation that Karl Barth shows towards Count

⁵⁴Barth, 4/4, 126.

Zinzendorf in the development of his Church Dogmatics is amazing, almost to the point of being embarrassing. It is hard to believe that this is the same person who previously had charged the Moravians with supplying Schleiermacher with the "erroneous content" of his Christology; that this is the same person who had implied that, because of their influence, "the decisive premise of all Christian theology" had been challenged in a way unparalleled in Church history except for the early Gnostics; that this is the same man who warned us that we would have "to forget Grunewald and the Middle Ages and the Reformation" if we wish to continue reading Schleiermacher without feeling anger and disgust to the point of vomiting.

Now we see the Count through the eyes of Karl Barth at so many of the critical turns of his theology: in his method of interpreting the Bible to his method of doing theology, in the crucial parts of his famous doctrine of reconciliation to the crux of the correct foundation of ethics. Suddenly, the Count is a knight in shining armor who alone and against the whole world has valiantly preserved and even advanced the true spirit of the Reformation. If Johann Gottfried Herder could say that "Zinzendorf departed the world as a conqueror who had few equals and none in the century past," Barth would instantly add: "and none in the centuries after also." In some ways, Barth interprets his task as doing in "theology

in the narrow sense" (as Barth likes to call it) what Zinzendorf did in "his poetry and preaching" (Barth's favorite term also). Admittedly, Barth considers Zinzendorf to have some flaws, but they are mainly attributed to his being an amateur and to a poor sense of "taste" and "style." But, otherwise, Barth considers Zinzendorf to have had an exceptional nose for what is absolutely crucial in theology and some very good answers to these crucial questions.

This impression of the importance of Zinzendorf to the theology of Karl Barth is confirmed in his own words when he was asked to address the community at Herrnhut on October 12, 1960. There Barth confessed:

If Zinzendorf was right about the main thing -- not always in the right form -- in taking as his centre Jesus Christ, all of him and him alone. . . if he was right in his view that the reconciliation of God with the world had already been completed, in his understanding of the relationship between gospel and law, in his view of the church as the community of the Lamb, the living Christ, then I may say in all modesty that I too am right. The whole of my theological thought revolves round this point, and this is where I am attacked. Zinzendorf and I stand and fall together.⁵⁵

"Zinzendorf and I stand and fall together" -- I doubt that the Barth who could not even embrace a "Barthian" could say that about almost any other figure in Church history, except with the possibility of the two great reformers, Luther and Calvin themselves. It is

⁵⁵Busch, 447. Emphasis mine.

interesting that both before and after Barth's meeting with the Moravians, he met with two other evangelical groups, that of Billy Graham in America and some Methodists in Switzerland. The former he called "the gospel at gun point" and in the latter meeting, "Barth could not say the sort of things about John Wesley that he had done about Zinzendorf."⁵⁶

We need to be careful, however, to note the precise relation between Barth and Zinzendorf. While Barth's appreciation for the Moravians may have changed, it would be wrong to argue very hard for a dramatic change in Barth himself. Barth would have been Barth with or without Zinzendorf. Zinzendorf may have contributed only in solidifying an already possessed position.

Neither can we argue for an influence upon Barth in the same way that Schleiermacher or Wesley may have been influenced. Barth was not brought up in a Moravian home or attended a Moravian seminary. Barth's first impression, in fact, of the value of the Moravians was a highly negative one. We witness in this circumstance is one theologian rediscovering another theologian of like mind. That "like mind," however, happens also to be behind the mind of Friedrich Schleiermacher, Barth's virtual antithesis.

So we are left with the question: who really is more representative of the Moravians? Or who carried forward

⁵⁶Busch, 446-7.

into the modern twentieth century world the best -- the "higher order" -- that the Moravians have to offer? Karl Barth or Schleiermacher? What dimensions of the Moravians are to be chosen? Those objective doctrines listed by Barth before the assembly at Herrnhut or the more subjective qualities that various interpreters of Schleiermacher have highlighted? These are questions that no one has asked, let alone answered.

But, regardless of how they are eventually answered, the Moravians have clearly had a powerful influence in the shaping that distinctive enterprise known as "modern Protestant theology." In fact, insofar as that enterprise is shaped by the dual contributions of Schleiermacher and Barth, the foundations of this theology have been poured during a conflicting argument over what Moravian molds ought to be used.

CHAPTER 6

A Final Observation and Question

We have outlined the Moravians' impact on music, early American religious history, the life of John Wesley and Methodism, the transmission of the heritage of Martin Luther, and the shape of modern Protestant theology. If anyone still remains unconvinced of the worth of studying the Moravian heritage, then perhaps we should compare some of the traditional Moravian beliefs with several beliefs which have come to distinguish the modern American Protestant Church. In more than one place, when we turn over a belief that has become characteristic of the modern Mainline Protestant Church, we find a small, unobtrusive sign: "Made in Moravia."

A Final Observation: The Moravians and
Modern Mainline Protestant Beliefs

George Forell has made a very sharp point on this matter in his introduction to Count Zinzendorf's public lectures delivered in London.¹ If we could pick out several beliefs that have come to characterize the modern Mainline church, among them certainly would be the value of ecumenism, the role of women, and advocacy of peace. The liberals and realists among us may complain that the

¹Zinzendorf, viii-ix.

Mainline Church does not indeed embrace these values as it should. The conservatives might complain that the Mainline Church does embrace them -- too closely -- therefore, the Protestant church has left the mainstream of America and brought about the decline of the Church. Regardless of differing opinions about these values, they are a few among many others that are associated with the Mainline Church.

As far as ecumenism goes, we have already read Karl Barth's coronation of Nicolas von Zinzendorf as the first genuine ecumenist in church history. We shall have more to say about this later. But over two hundred years have past in America and no one has come even remotely close to the vision that Zinzendorf had of one united New Church for the entire New World.

Concerning the status of women in the church, the ordination of women is often considered one of the chief virtues and prominent litmus tests for the presence of a Mainstream Church. The Presbyterian Church, for example, recently made a great deal about celebrating the silver anniversary of the ordination of women in their church.² But that record looks quite shabby when compared to the Moravians' record of ordaining women to church office from their beginnings. That silver anniversary was celebrated

²This celebration applies to the ordination of women as elders only. They have ordained women as ministers for only twenty-five years.

the year Martin Luther said Mass for the first time himself!

The inclusion of feminine dimensions in "God-talk" is another characteristic that the Mainline Church has debated (though it is still an open question whether it will be accepted in the pew as well as the seminary). But Zinzendorf also set the standard for the inclusion of the feminine dimension of the Divine in theology and in preaching.^a To the extreme displeasure of his Puritan contemporaries, the Count insisted on taking the femininity of the Holy Spirit just as seriously as they were taking the masculinity of Jesus. Because of his concentration on the image of the Christian as the "Bridegroom of the Soul," to Zinzendorf, all virtues of the Christian life had to be feminine. His reasoning may not have been very liberating, but the result was too radical for his contemporaries to handle.

As far as the Moravians' advocacy of peace, we have already seen that their community was born out of their abhorance of the wars which precipitated from the revolution of John Hus. Their pacifism repeatedly caused them trouble especially in the New World where they insisted on instilling the value of pacifism in their missions to the Native Americans and, then, were confronted with the American Revolution and questions of

^aZinzendorf, ix.

their allegiance.⁴ While the Moravians may not be as hardline pacifist as the Quakers, neither would I characterize the Mainline Church that way despite their recent push for "peace in a nuclear age."

These are just three easily identifiable Mainline issues where the Moravians have been pioneers. Only later did they become issues of the mainstream. This pioneering spirit evident not only here but also in their missions is one of the key qualities of the Moravians. It is also one of the important qualities which they share with the ministry in Monterey Park. And it is also one of the key areas for creating vitality in the Church.

A Final Question: Sectarianism

One final question remains before we leave our study of the contributions of the Moravian Church. Is not studying the Moravians for clues to the meaning of the Protestant Church quite like examining the Amish or the Dunkers as the answer to the identity of the mainline church? In other words, are Moravians not "mainline" at all, but rather are separatists or sectarians and unconcerned with the "mainstream" of the Church (or society, for that matter). The answer to this question is several-fold.

⁴For an excellent account of the Moravians' adoption of pacifism, see John Weinlick, "Moravianism in the American Colonies," Continental Pietism and Early American Christianity, ed. F. Ernest Stoeffler (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 156-59.

First -- yes, the Moravians have had a sectarian dimension to their church life. In fact, Sydney Ahlstrom calls them "the most important of the pietistic sects in America."⁵ As we shall see, freedom has always been a cherished value in their tradition and the freedom to live on one's own terms is certainly within the scope of freedom that deserves respect.

However, there is much more to the Moravians than sectarianism. One of the central theses of this paper shall be that to pigeon-hole the Moravians as merely pietistic sectarians is to grossly underestimate their value to society and religion, to misrepresent their intentions and their actual existence in a very unfair and one-dimensional way, and to miss precisely those elements of the Moravians that I see as most valuable and upon which this paper will concentrate. This is not a paper on the value that either pietism or sectarianism could have in the revival of the Mainline Church.

A preliminary report of historians themselves underscores this fact. Sydney Ahlstrom, for example, concludes his comments on the Moravians by lamenting that "the Moravians never succeeded in entering American life as

⁵Ahlstrom, 241. This fact alone, however, might make them worthy of study if the purpose of this paper was to describe the contributions which pietism could make to the life of the Mainline Church. Unfortunately, this is not our purpose.

an influential church movement,"⁶ but this is despite their attempt to do so, and despite the other "churchly" dimensions which they brought with them to America, and "despite the unique way in which they blended churchly and sectarian traditions." In fact, one of the other "stumbling blocks" to their success was "Zinzendorf's grandiose ecumenical projects." The Moravians have often been the exact opposite of "sectarians," being vocal advocates for church unity and ecumenism long before it became popular in the Mainline Church.

Ernst Troeltsch -- the historian who invented the church vs. sect typology -- admits, too:

Like the Quakers, this body was not a simple expression of the sect-idea, even though it was connected with the Church. From the very beginning it contained various elements.⁷

These "various elements" we have seen in our brief history of the Moravian Church. Down through the ages, the Moravian Church has taken an amazing variety of forms. Initially it was a separatist body which withdrew to Kunwald because of their belief that there was very little else to do in the catastrophe which resulted from the revolt of John Hus. Later, during the period of "the Hidden Seed," the Moravian community took the form of an

⁶Ahlstrom, 243.

⁷Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches, vols.1-2, trans. Olive Wyon (1931, rpt., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 2:719.

underground movement -- again, not of their own choosing. Under Zinzendorf, several different forms of being a church were tried. There is the establishment of entire towns like Herrnhut and Bethlehem. The Count also had his idea of ecclesiolae in ecclesia, small groups gathered within the established churches for the purposes of fellowship and increased attention to the cultivation of faith. This he borrowed from the pietists, particularly Spener. And, again, we must not forget his greatest aim: an ecumenical church in America. The Count was not one to be tied down to any single form of being the church. With the secularization of Bethlehem, the modern Moravian Church in America has become almost the same as any other denomination. In this current form, there is no way anyone can make a substantial case that the Moravians are a bunch of world-rejectors or a closed society.

In my opinion, the "church" of the Moravians has embraced so many different forms of existence that I would prefer to refer to what I am describing as "the Moravian spirit," "Moravianism" (if the negative connotations of an "ism" can be ignored), or simply as "the Moravians."

Furthermore, the instances when the Moravians have been sect-like often have been times when it has been against their own choosing. Hus burned in 1415, but the Moravian forerunners did not choose to form a separate community until 1457 -- forty two years later. Then, they

formed it because there appeared no other choice available. Time and again, their pacifism has forced them to live unto themselves. Certainly, there have been elements in their community that have called for a deliberate turning of their back on the world, but just as certainly there have elements that no more wanted to reject either the Church or the world than Martin Luther wished to deliberately leave the Roman Catholic Church.

I believe that the assessment of church historian Martin Marty is most apt: "The Moravians, small as they are, are not an eccentric sect but a group of hospitable and generous Christians."⁹

This, then, is the task that lies before us: to examine the areas of Christian life where the modern experience of the Good Shepherd Church and the historical record of the Moravian Church intersect. This criterion ought to limit our task to a reasonable size and make those areas chosen not a purely subjective matter of the author. Hopefully, we will find this task illuminating and as exciting as the ministries we have seen in Monterey Park and "Moravia."

⁹Martin E. Marty, Christian Churches in the United States (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 95.

CHAPTER 7

The Historical Basis for the Good Shepherd Ministry
With Parallels from the Moravian Church

Introduction: What Makes Good
Shepherd Work?

We have examined the history, character, and contributions of the Moravians. We now know what makes the Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church ministry in Monterey Park unique and we have a skeletal outline of how it currently operates. But how did it arrive at this unique position? What deeper forces are at work now to keep its ministry growing? And, finally, where in its ministry might we find parallels to the Moravian spirit so that we may see that such a spirit can function in the modern world today?

As a person of the original congregation, I can speak best about the dynamics that have operated and still operate in that church and culture in Monterey Park. There is no question that the positive values which the two other congregations have brought with them have contributed greatly to the success of the total ministry. But, even though I have worked closely over several years with the other two congregations, as a person of Anglo-background, I still cannot speak with authority on all of their dynamics. I will speak as faithfully as I

can from my limited perspective, understanding that this study cannot be complete until someday a person of one of the other congregations writes its history from their perspective and traditions.

Historical Factors Contributed
by the Original Congregation

One of the theses of this project regarding what makes the Good Shepherd Church unusual is that the people of the original congregation are not unusual. Unlike other experimental communities committed to a particular social issue, the people of this church did not come to this community with a previous attachment to a cause. They did not even choose to be where they ended up being. They intended to be nothing else but a highly typical Mainline Protestant suburban church. The church was, and still is, a highly diverse body of people with a very wide range of theological and political opinions. It is definitely not a "liberal" church. This dynamic (in that it is not intentionally unique) may make Good Shepherd unique, but it also raises our hopes that what happened here in Monterey Park can be applied with some meaning to many other churches in the Mainline tradition.

What I am about to say may seem to contradict directly what I have just written. One of the most important contributing factors to the arrival of the Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church at its current situation is a

historical factor which does set it apart from other Mainline churches. Some time after the original Good Shepherd Church moved to Monterey Park, it underwent what is usually interpreted as a "charismatic renewal."

This is not totally different from most Mainline Churches because many, if not all, Protestant churches tend to have some element in their congregation which is of this persuasion. And it is not totally unheard of that individual mainline churches at times are affected as a whole by this strand of Christianity as the Monterey Park Church was. The Great Awakening, after all, had major manifestations of "works of the Spirit." But, somehow, the modern-day Mainline Protestant Church is known for its rather distant attitude towards this strand of Christianity. What happened at Good Shepherd, therefore, is usually considered "unique." Even if we accept the definition that this particular movement is "different," in the end, the Good Shepherd story arrives at a point that is not -- or at least should not -- be considered "extremist," "unique," or "different" from the Mainline Protestant Church's theological tradition.

The details of the arrival of this "charismatic renewal" are not necessary to repeat. In all probability, they are also impossible to retell because the event was so controversial -- to put it mildly -- that each person seems to have an entirely different story about what "really"

happened. What is known, however, is that the congregation that once was on fire with hope became burned with a split three ways. Those who were Presbyterian in a way that could not accept the charismatic movement left the church. Those who were charismatic in a way that could not accept those who were not left in the other direction. What was left was probably the smallest of the three groups: those whose Christian faith could embrace both streams of Presbyterianism and Pentecostalism. They were the middle ground. But they were a very crippled middle ground.

As devastating as this upheaval was, it probably was the very best preparation for creation of the successful tri-cultural ministry that was to come.

First, the group that was left had a specific orientation that would make acceptance of people of different race and culture an easier affair. The people of "the middle ground" not only knew the value of tolerance, the acceptance of differences, even the out-going embrace and celebration of differences; they discovered the depth dimension in faith. Somehow through this vicious struggle they learned that there is something deeper in our faith than that which either the terms "Presbyterian" or "Pentecostal" could absolutely define. Very much like the Moravians who became famous for their desire to embrace people regardless of denomination, they had accepted the Moravian-like belief that such names and qualities are

"externals" and something much more important lies deeper inside us, in the "internals" of faith. Putting one's finger precisely on what it is that is deeper is a very hard thing to do. There is a quality of mystery in these depths. But from that point on, the people of the middle ground had their eyes focused on this indescribable deeper dimension of life. Acceptance of people with other kinds of different externals such as language and skin color was not such a jarring affair. We may be cautious about creating an absolute dichotomy between "internal" and "external," but the concentration on the depth dimension of life is something which ought not to be foreign to the Mainline church. Paul Tillich considered it just as valuable as the Moravians or the people of Monterey Park.

A second result of the catastrophic break-up was that the group which was left discovered a fundamental rhythm of Christianity. The traditional Christological understanding of that rhythm is the path of Christ's cross and resurrection. But elder Darlene McClain has captured the essence of what happened to the church from a Spirit-oriented perspective: the church had undergone a process of brokenness and healing.

This new understanding of the rhythm of the church and of faith was not just a theological, intellectual insight. From the point of the break-up on, it became a main interpretative element in the decision-making and vision of

the church, its ministry, and its future. The congregation has been consistently willing to see and to seize the harder paths which lie before them because of their faith in the resurrection which lies beyond it. They know that without risking the brokenness, there can be no chance of real and deep healing. Because of their confidence in their future -- as God's future, not really theirs -- they are able to accept agendas for the church that require a measure of self-sacrificial commitment, knowing that self-sacrifice is not intended to be the primary goal. Above of all, the church has been amazingly liberated from the common need among churches for "success -- and success now." Immediate success is not the criterion for judging whether or not to initiate certain programs or for making key decisions. A faithfulness to the rhythm of Christianity is a better criterion.

A third reason why this trauma helped to prepare the congregation for the acceptance of the two Asian congregations is the most obvious one. Out of the original church's sense of its own personal weakness, it was ready to open its arms to two more churches which might return it to strength. This could be interpreted as the most self-centered motivation of all the reasons, but it is important that we remember that the original congregation was seeking help from peoples of entirely different cultures, languages, nations, even race. The weakness and

the humbling of the original church actually achieved a greater effect in reducing the paternalism that is often the pattern between "American" churches and the newly-arrived. This paternalism is probably one of the greatest reasons why other churches in America have not leaped at the chance of following the path of the Monterey Park church. To enter the process actually seeking assistance from the immigrant congregations rather than "helping those poor people out" is essential to laying a foundation of equality and mutuality. It is much easier to succeed when starting on the right foot.

Seeing the Good Shepherd Church it is hard not to think of Paul's confession that "'God's power is made perfect in weakness.' I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses that the power of Christ may rest upon me"

(2 Cor. 12:9).¹ The church's pain and weakness has also made them see things in a wider perspective and appreciate people who are not automatically the same as themselves.

Another natural result of this three-way schism is an intense desire for and appreciation of unity among the people who were left. The groups which left the church may feel justified in placing the righteousness of their cause above the unity of the church, but in the group that

¹One is also reminded of Karl Barth's affirmation that the Church "has no power of compulsion; and it is important that it should not forget its incompetence. . . . This open wound is the supreme advantage of the Church." The Epistle to the Romans, 366.

was left, the reverse is true. A healthy contempt for fractures, divisions, and setting up camps exists. There is a wise caution against anyone considering too easily that they hold the absolute truth. There is also a high sensitivity to both the value of community and its fragility. "Church" is not just what occurs when a group of individuals happen to meet. It is something which is to be cherished, cared for, nurtured, and placed high among the other competing values of religious life. Good Shepherd recognizes the strong Protestant right of individual conscience. But it also weighs that against the value of community. Or, in Eastern thought, the two are not "one versus the other," but yin and yang: equally necessary and complimentary. Thus, the middle group strives towards the goal of unity rather than uniformity -- which characterizes the goal of most groups which split off. This desire to unite while respecting the differences of others is certainly a key motivating factor in the creation of three Good Shepherd Churches.

A further reason why this catastrophe produced such an appropriate preparation for future developments at Good Shepherd is that the intense conflict over the issue of the works of the Holy Spirit left a distinctive mark on the church. For so many years a main issue in both theology and the Protestant Church has been Christocentrism. The Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church definitely has placed a

high value on being a "Christocentric" church. However: the charismatic renewal has left the congregation with an exceptionally high valuation of the presence and work of the Holy Spirit. If any church deserves the name, this one considers itself a Spirit-centered church.

It is not the case, though, that the Spirit-centrism has replaced the Christocentrism. In his Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century and elsewhere, Karl Barth repeatedly argued for the image of Christ as the sole center of a circle versus any notion of an ellipse with two focal points.² But Good Shepherd would probably require a three-dimensional shape such as a cylinder in order to describe its equal allegiance to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.³

With the higher emphasis on the Holy Spirit comes a different kind of emphasis, too. The original issue over the particular gifts of the Spirit such as tongues has faded. The final attitude towards such gifts might be expressed as: "Those who have them, simply have them. Those who do not, do not." There is no attempt on either group to either flaunt who they are or to coerce others to become like them. Instead, there is a greater concentration on the more "mainstream" ideas of the gifts

²Karl Barth, Protestant Theology, 460.

³If anything, the first person of the Trinity is somewhat diminished -- unintentionally -- due to the emphasis on the other two.

of the Spirit, or what Paul calls, the greater gifts.

Above all else, the Holy Spirit and to live in that Spirit means love, freedom, wholeness, and health. Only the commitment to healing lingers as an idea from the "old battles". But it is a central activity in Jesus' ministry. It has become a very powerful metaphor for the self-understanding and source of hope in the congregation. This new definition of the presence of the Holy Spirit is a major motivating factor in the congregation's acceptance of the two other churches. To love at Good Shepherd means to embrace, to reach out, to accept, to care for, to seek communion/community with other people. It means to be always concerned more with the welfare of others, particularly the disadvantaged, than with the welfare of themselves. The freedom of the Spirit, proclaimed in Paul's magna carta of Galatians, gives the original congregation the ability to do what others have not done and also allows others to be different and free from their self-definition. It is a source of creativity and an impulse to exploration. This definition and emphasis on the Holy Spirit and its importance for our lives is one of the most important theological motivating factors in the original congregation's decision to embrace the two other churches.

Moravian Parallels to
Good Shepherd's History

A comparison of the spirit of Good Shepherd with the Moravian spirit may not yield striking unanimity, but parallels do exist. We have already noted the pietist orientation towards the "internals and externals" of life and their concern for the deeper former over the superficial latter.

Another major parallel involves the prominence of the category of "spirit" in the theology and life of both churches. For Good Shepherd, it is the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity who is central to their thought and being. For the Moravians, it is more "spirit" with a small "s" that is used to describe their life and their relation to God, the Spirit Divine.

The Moravians certainly are not without an emphasis on the third person of the Trinity. In fact, Count Zinzendorf, when he tried to establish one ecumenical Church in America, wished to call it "the Church of God in the Spirit." Their own fellowship is often categorized in the "enthusiast" form of the Church. Much like Good Shepherd, the Moravians are reknown for their extreme insistence on a Christocentric faith, but somehow, when it comes to describing their fellowship, the spirit of their community and the spirituality of their faith.

This was especially true when we tried to analyze the

Moravian influence on the Wesleys. Claude Welch pointed out that theology was not the prime area of influence:

By the end of the Georgia mission his theological ideas were, in fact, nearly in final form.⁴

Ronald Knox concurred and added that ethics was certainly not their great gift to Wesley.⁵ It was rather a certain quality of "spirit" that ignited what Wesley already thought, believed and practised.

In tracing the history of the Moravians, we found this to be true as well. It is very hard to define their fellowship in terms of confessional standards, the structures of their ecclesiastical institutions, or their modes of worship which change constantly through history. Yet a certain common spirit prevails.

Another notable similarity between the Moravians and Good Shepherd is in the matter of toleration of differences. Noting both the decisive Christocentrism (especially around the cross, as with Good Shepherd in its Christocentrism) of the Moravians and their toleration, the Moravian historian John Weirich says, "[The] two favorite mottos among Moravians are 'Christ and Him Crucified remain in our confession of faith,' [and] 'In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things

⁴Welch, 24.

⁵Knox, 459.

charity.⁶ As the first motto suggests, the only "essential" is the person of Jesus Christ and not necessarily any particular doctrine about him except the power of his crucifixion (which remains undefined in character). Moreover, what is essential is a trust and faith in him more than a belief or theology about him. And in matters of faith in that subjective sense, who is to judge that someone does not believe? Not only is the tolerance shown by the wideness of the "non-essential" category, but in both -- even in the matters of essential worth -- charity is the rule. It is hard not to interpret that charity as leniency.

The Moravian Church, however, carried its charity far beyond "leniency" when, like Good Shepherd, it demonstrated its central and passionate desire for expressed unity without uniformity. The Moravians have frequently been at the forefront in the ecumenical movement. Remember Karl Barth's comment about Zinzendorf being "the first genuine ecumenist of the modern age." Weinlick writes: "Two ideals dominated Zinzendorf's concept of Christian service, the preaching of the Gospel to primitive peoples and the gathering of earnest Christians within the various Protestant state churches into an interdenominational fellowship for the nurture of vital spiritual life."⁷ In

⁶Weinlick, "The Moravian Church," 19.

⁷Weinlick, "The Moravian Church," 8.

this regard, the Moravians directly rejected becoming a denomination itself until Zinzendorf's plans for one great worldwide church failed and they were left with almost no other mode of being.

CHAPTER 8

Geographical Influences On Good Shepherd
and Moravian Parallels

The historical events within the original congregation certainly prepared the way for their acceptance of the other two ethnic churches, but history does not account for all of the factors in the Good Shepherd Church's decision to adopt a trinitarian church plan. The influences from the outside, the pressures of their particular geographical location, the force of the overwhelming demographic changes provide further background for their decision. Admittedly, the decision itself was the congregation's. They did not at all have to respond the sweeping demographic changes the way that they did. But winds of change chiseled out of their stone features which may have remained hidden or undefined if those winds were not present.

A Church with a Mission

The overarching result of the confrontation of the Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church with the massive influx of immigrants was the solidification of the church's identity as a mission church.

By "mission church" I mean that Good Shepherd understands mission to be at the very heart of what they are doing and who they are. Mission is not just something

that they enthusiastically support with their dollars while someone else in Africa or Watts actually does it. Good Shepherd sees its own primary goal to be mission and tries to bring the force of that self-definition to bear on every possible facet of their community and life. Mission is not something relegated to one committee of their church, even if it should be considered a very important committee. Mission is what happens in every committee, whenever possible.

The term "mission" is one of the most vague and controversial words concerning the Protestant Church in recent times. But for Good Shepherd it means several unique and distinctive things.

1. To be a mission church means to be a church that takes action. Theology is fine, pietistic feelings are okay, but action is what counts. As in Liberation theology, the Good Shepherd church is praxis oriented. All of the radical yet pragmatic passages of the prophets, the gospels, and the letter of James stand out as a real challenge for this church. They are a guide for their life even though they know that they fall far short of fulfilling them. But they are not passages to be avoided, qualified, or explained away. The only things more important to this church than "to do" are to worship and to pray. But even these things derive part of their importance from their being both empowerment for action

and the only acts left when the actions of the hands and feet can do no more.

2. To be a mission church is to know oneself to be "on the border." In fact, it means to know oneself to be surrounded, even immersed in a culture and an environment which is not your own by birth. As the teacher in Alhambra said, "I feel like a missionary in my own land." The Good Shepherd church shares the same feeling -- but with one major exception. They believe that that is where they ought to be and where the Church ought to be. It is not an unfortunate and strange occurrence that has trapped them, having caught them unaware. To be a mission church is to deliberately choose to live "on the edge" of one's own natural existence. This self-acknowledgement has several further implications.

3. It means to accept and to understand oneself as a stranger in the land. It means accepting the fact the Church stands as a visitor and as a guest in another person's house. Certain rules of courtesy apply. A degree of sensitivity and humility is required. Accepting the customs and way of life which are not your own is expected. It is acknowledging that living and communicating will require a process of give-and-take. Moreover, as the outsider, the church may be asked initially to give first in order to show good faith and begin the dialogue. This understanding is obviously quite

the opposite of the traditional "old-time" picture of what a "missionary" is supposed to do. It is the opposite of charging into a new situation seeking first of all to pronounce and impose your rule upon the new land. Accepting one's status as a guest is contrary to behaving as if "we," the missionaries, were really the absentee landlords, now returned home to claim the land which has always been rightfully "ours."

4. To be a mission church in the sense of "living on the border" means also -- in a more positive sense -- to recognize oneself as a frontier church. The Church is (and ought to be) a pioneer in its ministry. Good Shepherd knows that it is doing things which may have not been done before. And it is not afraid to try. It knows that it may make (in fact, will make) mistakes. But that cannot be avoided. To have a strong and vigorous pioneering impulse at the center of the Church is absolutely necessary for the vitality and growth of the Church. A Church which loses its sense of being a pioneer or which actually discourages it stifles itself and denies the creativity, freedom and newness of the Spirit.

To be a pioneer is exciting, but it is also painful. The hardest land to work is ground which no one has worked before. Sacrifices are often required in addition to hard work. Moreover, it means recognizing the fact that, even if one is successful, it is only a matter of time before

your hard-won work and accomplishments are eclipsed. The goal of a pioneer is not success for oneself. The pioneer works in order for others to follow. And, if they follow, they will surely improve. Looking back after many years, those first efforts of the pioneer always look crude, misshapen, almost laughable. But that is the pioneer's honor: to be followed and then passed by, to shine for only a moment before being eclipsed. Yet this spirit, Good Shepherd believes, is absolutely essential to the life and growth of the Church.

5. To live "on the border" means also that the church daily experiences an interface between two or more cultures, values, even worlds. It is much easier to experience the "Church in the world but not of the world" feeling. The church knows that what it assumes and lives by within its "four walls" may not be (and probably is not) what is assumed outside those walls. It knows that it is not safe suburban Protestant church tucked comfortably within an environment that is almost homogeneous with itself.

It would be very easy to succumb to a Church against the World mentality. But the lines of interface do not coincide with the walls between the church and the world. They are part of the church itself. They cut through it just as much as any other part of society. To be a mission church is not to set up a camp with its four walls around

it like a barrier. To be sincere in mission means to commit oneself to embracing that community in love, absorbing part of itself into the church just as the church seeks to impart what is essential to it to the society.

6. The strongest support for this idea of the Church is the Good Shepherd belief that the Gospel is intrinsically cross-cultural and multi-cultural. Obviously, the Gospel is not the private possession of any one nation, race, language, sex, era, or any other distinction that can be made within the human race. The Gospel is for the entire human race: black, yellow and white; male and female; Formosan, Korean, Spanish and English; twentieth century, twenty-first century, nineteenth century and first century. There is an intrinsic electricity to it that draws it to what the world calls "barriers" and enables it to cross those supposed obstacles to communication. Part of the attraction to such multi-cultural and cross-cultural situations is the belief that the Gospel is greater than any one subset of the human race. The Church has everything to gain by seeking out the perspective of those who are different from itself. Part of the "electricity" of the Gospel, Good Shepherd believes, is the work of the Holy Spirit who alone is the guide of the message across that no-man's land between what one person says and

another person hears. In an age where it has become a major question whether "masculine" theology has anything in common with "feminine" experience or whether there can be any connection between the first century and twenty-first, Good Shepherd's belief that the Gospel is intrinsically oriented towards inter-cultural communication stands out against the background of very different views.

7. To be a mission church for Good Shepherd is not just to be active and living on the edge, but it also means to be actually more concerned about who or what lies beyond the four walls of the church than to be prepossessed with caring for itself. This is a significant statement since Good Shepherd is a very tight-knit community which tries to live out 1 John's idea of a love within their community which will make it stand out against the world. But the people of Good Shepherd find an equal passion in reaching out and serving those who are not within their community.

The best example of this concern happened when I was first called to be the pastor of the church. At the time of my call, I was told by presbytery officials that the congregation probably would close (and, in fact, should close) within a month. Good Shepherd was looked upon as one of those churches which still exist in membership but had long since outlived any meaningful purpose to exist. I was given only an one-third salary and the status of temporary stated supply with the goal that I would help the

congregation through an evaluative process and, hopefully, realize that they ought to close.

The church did go through the evaluative process. It did conclude that, for its own purposes, it no longer had a right to exist. A white church in Chinatown cannot expect to grow. But at that meeting, a turning point in their church history happened. The church, in fact, did die unto itself and decided to live only to facilitate the other two churches. Perhaps in the distant future there would once more be a predominantly English-speaking congregation, but the original congregation realized that it would not be them. It would be the children and grandchildren of the Asian congregations. Perhaps at that time there would be a few of the original congregation to merge with the generations who owned the future in Monterey Park. But the real goal of the original congregation was not the sustaining or even rebirth of itself, but the service of the current Asian congregations wherever their ministry might lead. To be a mission church for them, in this instance, was not to plant a seed in some strange environment and hope to cultivate the growth of that seed. It means to live for the sake of "the other," to desire the growth and benefit of what the seed-and-soil metaphor considers to be only dirt. This is the goal of the activity of mission and the reason for deliberately living on the edge.

Moravian Parallels in Mission

Here in the area of mission the parallels between Good Shepherd and the Moravians is even stronger than in their common desire for unity with other Christians. As we noted above, this was Count Zinzendorf's other great passion which dominated his life. Karl Barth commented that although Zinzendorf and the Moravians held an intensely personal (he says "private") faith, this "did not carry with it any desire on the part of those who participated in it to keep their materially very private Christianity to themselves, but rather impelled them to proclaim it urbi et orbi and to seek to assert it both in Church and society."¹

Barth talks of sharing faith, as in preaching the gospel, which is only one part of "mission" as Good Shepherd sees it (and probably for the Moravians, too). But that two-fold passion of Zinzendorf -- concern for unity with other Christians and desire for mission among the non-Christians -- shows the deeper impulse common to Good Shepherd: the out-going concern for other people besides oneself. Like Good Shepherd, the Moravians have always been known for the intimacy of their fellowship with each other, but this is not the sole purpose of the church.

With regard to the general topic of mission, Karl

¹Barth, Dogmatics, 4/3.2: 569.

Barth has some even more glamorous words of praise for the Moravians. Barth admits that in several ways the early missionary movement had its faults. But, he retorts:

What matters is the undoubted fact that the introduction and form of Evangelical world mission as we now know it may be attributed to the influence of Pietism.²

Hermann Franke may have been the first to seize the idea of world mission, but "the true genius of this Evangelical awakening was not that of Francke and Pietism in the narrower sense, but of Count Zinzendorf and his community [i.e., the Moravians]." Barth continues:

By the time of his death, their missionary achievement surpassed everything previously done by Protestantism for the proclamation of the Gospel among the heathen, and in proportion to its membership his community is still unrivalled in this field. . . This was not merely his central but his one and only missionary motive. And as he was able to implant it in others, his community, which he had never envisaged or established as a private community but as an oecumene in nuce, became in some sense radically and essentially a missionary Church to a degree not yet reached or excelled by any other in the Evangelical sphere.³

According to Barth, Zinzendorf may not have been the first, but he was the greatest -- him and his community being a quantum leap above everyone else -- in outreach to new peoples and lands. Moreover, Zinzendorf carried his program the deepest and most radical within the Church, seeking to establish in the Moravians the very same goal

²Barth, Dogmatics, 4/3.1: 25.

³Barth, Dogmatics, 4/3.1: 25.

which Good Shepherd has sought to set for itself. For the most part, Barth talks about mission in terms of the proclamation of the gospel and of sending out missionaries to other lands. This kind of movement Good Shepherd may embrace and financially support but does not exactly exemplify itself. But the underlying dynamics, goals, and motives for "mission" are very similar.

The Moravians were reknown not only for the quantity of "mission" which they accomplished by their tiny band. Their mission had a distinctive quality about it also. In this regard, perhaps the missionary enterprise of David Zeisberger was the most exemplary.

In terms for the American mission which echo Barth's words for the Moravian mission worldwide, Henry Warner Bowden writes:

Of all eighteenth-century Indian missionaries, the Moravians, or United Brethren, produced the greatest number of converts and Indian communities loyal to Christian principles.⁴

Bowden calls Zeisberger "the country's most distinguished missionary."⁵ Zeisberger's life was a constant repetition of one theme: repeated success followed by catastrophe caused by the white settlers in the area. Time and again, Zeisberger would set up magnificent camps of converts only

⁴Henry Warner Bowden, American Indians and Christian Missions (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 157.

⁵Bowden, 158.

to have them antagonized and all too frequently killed by whites or war. The settlements were models of peace, industry, and virtue. Adoption of total pacifism was a mandatory requirement of conversion to the Gospel. The natives were often so frugal, hard-working, and God-fearing that they looked more Puritan than the immigrants. But the settlements were always treated with jealousy, suspicion, and outright violence by the white neighbors. In one case, ninety were scalped and burned by white men. Most of those victims were women and children (61 of 90).

The style of Moravian mission was also distinctive. It was said that every evangelist entered the native American settlements by proclaiming them "heathen," sinful, and condemned to hell because they did not know the Gospel. The Moravians, however, simply preached the Good News. No words of hellfire condemnation and judgment were required by their Gospel. The Moravians always made the strongest effort to adopt the ways of the natives. They learned the natives' language and then translated the Bible and their hymnbooks into it. When a settlement of converts were interned for sixteen months near Philadelphia out of unjustified fear on the part of the whites, Zelsberger chose to join the natives in prison rather than live a decent life with the Philadelphia whites.

William Hutchison has pointed out that not only did

the Moravians eschew any theological prolegomenon to the gospel such as threatening hellfire-and-brimstone, they also deliberately aimed at avoiding any cultural prerequisites, too.⁶ This has been a major issue in missions, particularly in the colonial era. Missionaries often considered acceptance of European culture as a prerequisite preparation for "the savages" to receive the gospel. In fact, sometimes the culture was not just a prerequisite; "civilization" was of equal value with the message of the Church. But "one of the special contributions of Count Zinzendorf. . . lay in his forceful and repeated warnings to his followers to free themselves from all provincialisms, doctrinal as well as cultural."⁷ The Moravians from the beginning adopted a strategy which we would call "indigenization" or self-propagation. Establishing something called "Christian civilization" was not necessary for "preparing the ground" for the pure Gospel. Here a clear similarity exists between the Good Shepherd Church's intention and the Moravians'.

Another similarity is their common view of the communication of the Gospel. Johannes Hoekendijk, Heinrich Frick and Martin Kahler all pointed to the ideal of the Moravians: "true mission sows and plants without knowing

⁶William R. Hutchison, Errand to the World (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 25-8.

⁷Hutchison, 26.

what God will produce, but propaganda presumes to transplant."^e The job of the missionary is to preach not impose or presuppose. The results of what is preached are left in God's hands by the work of the Spirit.

Naturally, the Moravians were not perfect but their style of mission was diametrically opposed in intention -- and mostly in result, too -- to the way "mission" was being done to native Americans by other religious groups. This style is also similar to the Good Shepherd intent to be pioneers, yet humble and sensitive to the people with whom they are in mission. Behind both lies a common conviction that it is not only possible but right to deal with the Gospel with integrity and show that same integrity in dealing with the people who are not automatic Christians before the Gospel is even preached.

^eHutchison, 185.

CHAPTER 9

Theological Motives for the Good Shepherd
Church and Moravian Parallels

Three very clear and strong theological reasons motivated the Good Shepherd church to enter into partnership with the other two churches. They continue to govern the spirit of the three churches today.

Theological Motives

First, the original congregation believed that all Christians are part of the same family of God. Through Jesus Christ, we are made brothers and sisters of each other and of Christ. As John 1:12 states: "But to everyone who received him and believed in his name, he gave the power to become children of God." Ordinarily the notion of everyone being brothers and sisters of each other is warm, fuzzy notion without much bite. Or it is understood as an artifact of a liberal gospel long since passed by. But for the people of Good Shepherd this belief carried with it a radical, practical mandate. If these Taiwanese and Korean Christians were indeed their brothers and sisters, then how could they be denied access to worship their common Parent? And how could they be accepted on any other basis than as equals? Can a brother charge a sister money in order to have access to their own

parents? This idea of sisterhood had very concrete budgetary consequences and very direct guidance in the operation of the Board of Trustees and the relationships between the three sessions.

The second belief has to do with the stewardship of the facilities. Even though the original congregation was the one which purchased the land, built the buildings, incurred the debt and paid it off. They refused to believe that it was their church. "This is God's house," is the phrase heard over and over. In a logic parallel to the brother and sister belief, the people of the original congregation could not believe that they (or anyone) could collect rent on a property that they did not own. Perhaps as good stewards they should have collected enough money to defray the cost of keeping the facilities in good shape under the burden of increased use, but even that much receipt of money from God's property seemed illegitimate.

A third theological reason for the initiation and guidance of the trinitarian pattern was the original congregation's rejection of paternalism and hierarchy. The nesting arrangement may be the predominant relation between white and ethnic churches, but Good Shepherd took the time to question the validity of that predominance. Could there not be a better relationship between two churches other than landlord and renter? What kind of message does that kind of hierarchical relationship communicate to the ethnic

churches about their status as fellow Christians? Even if the nesting relationship is established out of "good" intentions -- to provide a place for the Christians who have no building -- Isn't that still paternalistic? Is there not a way that minimizes the paternalism even more? The answer in every case was that the trinitarian relationship far exceeded the nesting relationship in every category except monies collected. For Good Shepherd, the latter in no way was comparable to the former. The desire to avoid paternalism and hierarchial tendencies continued to guide the newly created relationship between the three churches.

Moravian Parallels in the Church
and Christian Education

There are many strands in the background of Moravian history that coincide with these beliefs about stewardship, the family of God, and the rejection of domination. But probably the one strand that stands out most in the foreground of Moravian values is the conception of their Church as a family of God. Christ is literally referred to as the Elder Brother. The name of the Church -- United Brethren -- also strongly and explicitly proclaims their fellowship to be marked by bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood. It was a common complaint against Zinzendorf and his community that they referred to each other too much as "little brother" and "little sister." Indeed, it did go

too far in calling the Count himself "Papa." Actually naming each other "brother" and "sister" is not a common practice in Monterey Park, however.

A further point-by-point comparison of these theological beliefs of the Good Shepherd Church with the Moravians is not entirely fruitful since the other two beliefs have a special meaning for Good Shepherd which the Moravians share only in general terms. But this would be a good place to describe one aspect of the Good Shepherd ministry that is extraordinarily filled with Moravian tones: the educational ministry of the Formosan Church.

As mentioned above, the English and Korean congregations united their Christian education programs over ten years ago. The Korean way of conducting Christian Education was very similar to the American way: through classrooms and teaching. The major difference lay in the Korean emphasis on the devotional and prayer life as being in equal value to book learning.

The Formosans, on the other hand, had a very different, established pattern of Christian Education that probably results from a combination of cultural differences and their background from Taiwan where religious education in their own language was forbidden. Like the Moravians, the Formosans are a singing Church. Music is highly valued, especially cultivated, and a main instrument of evangelism and education as well as worship.

An American church at its beginning would probably establish a Sunday school as soon as a significant worshipping congregation is secured. For the Formosans, however, the first step after establishing the worship service (or perhaps concurrent with this step!) is to form a choir. The choir is the first and main instrument of Christian education in the Formosan Church. Often it is, or develops quickly into a youth choir also. The message of Christianity and the loyalty demanded of it are learned through the process of singing and forming a highly committed choir.

The second group established by the Formosan church, after the choir is well established, is a Friday night youth group. "Youth group" should probably be in quotes since it is not just an hour of fun-and-games with a ten minute devotional like many American youth groups. An hour of preaching is expected at the beginning, followed by another hour or so of group discussion, question-and-answers, and organizational affairs. Then the fun-and-games begin until 10:00 p.m. or so. Only during this past year has the Formosan church taken the third and final step of forming an actual Sunday school educational program on Sunday morning. The emphasis on establishing community over classrooms is a particularly effective program of education. The centering of the Church on singing and the choirs has an added, very

important benefit, too. Whereas the American church in general has an enormous drop-out problem with students who graduate from Sunday school but then do not go to church, the choir system keeps graduating its people further and further into the center of the worshipping body with one smooth continuous flow until they reach the very center of worship, the adult choir of Sunday morning. The system promotes a continuity of development rather than providing a convenient escape-hatch at crucial points in the educational process. The Formosan system is a very impressive way for doing Christian education without a single chalkboard, teacher, or lecture until the final phase.

CHAPTER 10
Advantages Arising from Within
the Trinitarian Pattern

All of the previous reasons and influences for the establishment of the trinitarian relationship in Monterey Park have to do with the original congregation alone and what it brought to the relationship and hoped to incorporate into it. The two Asian congregations obviously brought with them equally important dynamics. Unfortunately, I do not know the history of their congregations and I would not consider myself a sufficient authority even on their current state. Besides, it would probably triple the size of this paper if sufficient time was spent accounting for their two other points of view, too. This is a very unfortunate circumstance, but one which cannot be avoided.

All of the previously cited reasons also pertain only to the past status of the original congregation. There are also present reasons for the success of the trinitarian pattern which issue not from any one of the three churches but from the dynamics of the pattern itself. The three churches found that the trinitarian concept contained a snowball effect. Once it was set in motion, other positive results happened.

Creating an Atmosphere of Equality

One is that the pattern itself fosters a sense of equality and minimizes paternalism. This is a major benefit. The achievement of this goal does not need to rest solely on the personal virtues and good intentions of the people of any of the three congregations. It is embodied in an objective structure. The particular number of three is especially effective in accomplishing this since it provides a constant third partner always objective to any disagreement between the other two. Three churches, of course, are harder to coordinate, but the added difficulty in scheduling is more than compensated for by the deeper goal of equality and partnership. On the positive side, apart from problem-solving, the triad arrangement forces cooperation (if only to survive) and provides a constant framework for developing community through work, worship and fellowship.

Perhaps the most convincing proof of the benefits of this arrangement is what actually happened at Good Shepherd as the strength of three congregations changed. To be counted as equal in the "political" arena of the church does not mean that the churches are actually equal in size, finances, and strength of ministry. In the beginning, the original congregation was the strongest of the three. It not only had the land and buildings, but it had a larger, established congregation. In the initial arrangement, the

original church bore part of the burden for the other two fledgling churches. But as the demographics of the Monterey Park community changed and the original congregation lost its membership base, it became the smallest of the three churches, unable to support the salary of its professional minister. The two Asian congregations had grown substantially. Now it was their turn, helping the original congregation by not only accepting more of the care for the buildings. They actually helped the original church financially so that they could retain a level of professional ministry which, on their own, would have been reduced to Sunday pulpit supply.

Who knows how the relative strengths of the three congregations will change in the future? One thing is certain: they will always be in flux. And the trinitarian relationship will continue to serve as a balancing force for the good of all three.

Unique Benefits for the Ethnic Church

A second, very powerful benefit of the trinitarian pattern is that it alone achieves a major goal concerning ethnic churches. To respect, preserve, and celebrate the unique qualities of one's own ethnic tradition -- culturally and religiously -- is one of the chief goals of an ethnic church. It is a major reason for there being ethnic churches. These "uniquenesses" are often the

exciting life-blood of the congregations. But, unless the ethnic church intends to become a kind of withdrawn, ghetto community, there is always the desire of the church to find its place in American society, to assimilate to some degree, and to meet the demands of the second and third generations of their own community which desire a more integrated style of ministry.

Every ethnic church must work this dynamic out for their own -- in their own way and according to their own time. Unfortunately, church structures usually impose a timetable of their own and inevitably treat these two important goals as contradictory or even mutually exclusive. Nesting relationships allow the congregation to retain their own identity and could enable some interaction between the "Anglo" church and ethnic church -- if there are some special people in both churches willing to make that leap where no connection whatsoever is required. The growth -- both in numbers and in assimilation -- of the ethnic church also soon tests the validity of the nesting arrangement. If, as in southern California, astronomical amounts of money are required to build a new church building, the nesting arrangement becomes more and more problematic for growing congregations. It often feels as if the building has its own timeclock ticking away.

On the other hand, one of the first questions every

single visitor to Monterey Park has asked is: "Why don't you just unify the three churches and become one?" This question is usually motivated by the assumption that the goals of ecumenism and unity are achieved only when one church structure exists. This is simply not the case, especially at this point in the development of the three congregations. One church structure, such as having only one Session, would only mask and inhibit the real uniquenesses that exist in each congregation right now. Such a premature attempt at this one form of unification fails to respect the importance and the integrity of each ethnic congregation. As we said, this quality usually is one of the chief springs of vitality for the ethnic church. Moreover, as a minority in society, having a central place such as the church where people of common tradition can find support is extremely important for the minority community. All of our studies of the history of the Black community in America have shown this to be true. Making, for example, the Taiwanese and the Koreans join a "Monterey Park Community Church" instead of Good Shepherd reeks havoc with so many aspects of the needs of a minority community that they probably simply would not attend.

The trinitarian pattern is the only pattern which fulfills both needs of the ethnic congregation. It fully respects their own uniqueness, tradition, and way of

worship. But it also has built into the structure (not just in good intentions or in extra special individuals) an appropriate level of unity and a constant call (along with the resources to answer that call) to develop that unity further. Each congregation can possess their own celebrations and concerns, but there is a constant, structural witness that there is a higher vision than one's own personal concerns and contributions. That is true for the so-called "Anglo" church of the majority just as much as for the ethnic churches. Moreover, the trinitarian structure communicates that those two values are not mutually exclusive -- and should not be. The higher vision transcends but embraces the personal one. This need to be true to oneself and to the universal community of faith and the world is a requirement not just for ethnic churches. It applies to every church.

Christian Education with
an International Vision

A third benefit of the trinitarian arrangement is that in one church one can find a religious experience in both one's own tradition and language and in international scope. This dynamic applies to all facets of church life, but it is especially influential in Christian education. For the ethnic churches, it is a very big "drawing card." The adults of the ethnic community often prefer worship and Christian Education in their own language, but their

youth, growing up in America, usually insist on an English format. Not only can the trinitarian pattern supply both -- which is rare among churches -- but, even in the English format, the adults can also feel relatively confident that their youth are being exposed to their ethnic tradition which the adults consider one of the highest values in life. Tensions certainly still remain within ethnic families adapting to an American culture, but outright conflict can be avoided. The second and third generations do not have to physically leave the church of their parents and grandparents in order to join an English-only congregation.

What is at issue here is not just the offering of a smorgasbord of religion and the opportunity for the exercise of the freedom of choice. It is the attempt to address in a creative and positive way one of the greatest pressures on immigrant families of any background. Moreover, as an individual making that rough journey of transition, trying to integrate who they are in their ethnic roots with who they growing into because of their strange new culture, the multi-cultural setting can be very attractive also. Outright rejection of either the new or the old within one's own person is minimized as well.

Needless to say, the multi-cultural setting can be a very exciting and attractive environment for American-born

persons, too. Unfortunately, this really is a matter of free choice since society does not usually pressure White-Anglo-Saxon Protestants to join a church outside of their culture.

Related to this dynamic in Christian Education is that fact that crucial elements in Christian Education are learned in much more profound ways than through a chalkboard. The students learn firsthand through experience the dimensions of the Gospel that are uniquely highlighted in a multi-cultural setting. No flannelboard ever created the kind of openness and respect that assumed in the trinitarian pattern. What is learned on the chalkboard is often put immediately in practise in the church kitchen and parking lot. Few questions feel academic or not relevant here. One can see firsthand that there are several different ways to be a Christian and for a church to be The Church. Lectures on social awareness and caring for people different from "you" are meaningless since that is learned day after day by sharing a room, a pew, a fork and spoon -- or chopsticks, as well as each other's views.

Flexibility and Adaptation

A fourth possibility which has never been tried but could result from the trinitarian pattern is the ability to move different congregations in and out of the three-fold pattern when necessary. The Episcopal bishop for Los

Angeles once lamented that his congregations were always one ethnic group behind the actual community which they served. They were white when the communities changed to Hispanic. By the time the white church had dissolved and the larger Church could establish an Hispanic ministry, the community had become Asian. Who knows what the next group will be? The extreme changes at Monterey Park testify to the difficulty of the Church addressing that question.

But the trinitarian pattern does have the advantage of being almost as flexible as the demographic changes around it. For once, the Church could be in-step with its own community instead of being constantly out-of-step. Changing congregations does not require the death or eviction of every single member to inhabit the facilities at 606 South Atlantic Boulevard. If, for example, it is clear that the original congregation is going to dissolve in a few years, the presbytery or synod could actually plan what type of new church would be best to replace it, based on demographic projections. The seeds for that ministry could already be planted before the use of a full-sized facility was necessary. Even if the presbytery or synod is lacking in people with such foresight, it is no great tragedy to have one congregation -- or even two decline or even cease to exist, resulting in several years of discouraging ministry until a new church can take over

the buildings, overcome the years of neglect and start anew. In the trinitarian pattern there will always be one of the congregations still vital, demonstrating a lively church presence to the community regardless of how long or how deep the decline in the other congregations may be. Obviously, if all three happen to decline catastrophically, something major must be happening in the community itself.

Conclusions About the Trinitarian Pattern

These are just some of the reasons why the pattern adopted by Good Shepherd has worked. They are what motivated it in the beginning and continue to drive it in the present. That does not mean that the pattern is flawless. Usually it is those obstacles which make the pattern unlikely that people raise automatically by themselves. Matters of scheduling and opportunities for conflict are the most obvious drawbacks. But few stop to think of the benefits of the system and to weigh them against what is essentially the benefit of a smooth running operation. As with democracy, the people of Good Shepherd are willing to tolerate some loss in expediency for the sake of higher moral values.

These arguments for the trinitarian pattern also do not mean that this pattern is for everyone or that even Good Shepherd is locked into this one relationship. Time changes all things. One church may grow so much that it

effectively outgrows the limitations of the pattern and the ability to share space. If one of the three churches, especially the original church, had a history of severe maladjustment and lack of cooperation within its own community, it may need most of its energies spent on solving its own problems rather than carrying its fair share of the common ministry. Again: the cultural and historical tension between Chinese and Korean tests the strength of the Good Shepherd system constantly. One person mentioned that if the third congregation were Japanese, such a three-way relationship would be impossible, at least among new immigrants. Choosing congregations in a way that lacks sensitivity to the history of the relations of their particular cultures is another situation where the trinitarian pattern may be ripe for failure rather than success.

However, I did present the reasons for the Good Shepherd decisions, because I believe that, in the main, they are not what makes Good Shepherd unique. They are often fairly simple, uncommonly direct, and well within the reach of the average Mainline congregation. Such things as believing in "the family of God," "the power of the Holy Spirit," stewardship or the treating of everyone as equals -- these are very mainstream (so mainstream, in fact, that they are almost bland) which most churches preach ad nauseam but rarely see or seize the consequences

and the power of what they preach. They usually work to comfort the parishoner rather than energize the church. The particular geographical and demographical changes in Monterey Park forced Good Shepherd to adopt a novel approach to its ministry. Hopefully, other churches can willingly embrace the virtues of the system as they see it rather than waiting for their community to challenge and change the agenda of the church.

CHAPTER 11

Conclusion

In the pages above I have outlined the existence of two realities that the Mainline Protestant Church has typically ignored: the history of the Moravian Church and the current example of the ministry in Monterey Park. Neither is treated very seriously because the former is seen as outside the mainstream and belonging to a by-gone era. The latter is usually viewed as experimental and unique -- a product only of its peculiar environment.

I hope that I have shown that both are extremely relevant, if not urgent for the American Protestant Church. Both are well within the possibilities of the action and theology of the Mainline Protestant Church. In fact, some very important and creative suggestions are provided by both in addressing the fundamental questions about the meaning and direction of the American Mainline Protestant faith.

And, the relevance of both is especially highlighted when we can see parallels between them which neither one intended. Both Monterey Park and the Moravians have their own integrity and identity. But in Monterey Park we can see how some Moravian ideals might actually be practiced in the American church and culture today. And in the Moravian tradition, we see that the Monterey Park

situation is not a historical aberration, with no deeper justification. Several of their key ideas have been tried long before in the very worthwhile history of the Moravian tradition.

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